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Australian

Wild

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Death in the Hills

Editorial

LAST WINTER NO LESS THAN FOUR PEOPLE died, or in one case is missing presumed dead, in the Australian Alps. First, Stephen Crean, reportedly a most experienced cross country skier, disappeared whilst on a short solo outing from Charlotte Pass, New South Wales. A few weeks later, as news was coming in of the discovery of the bodies of two young skiers on Mt Stirling, Victoria, it was learned that a group of walkers on Mt Feathertop, Victoria, had plunged down a steep slope when a snow cornice collapsed. The group leader, experienced bushman and Nordic skier, Tom Kneen, was killed. It is difficult to recall a higher alpine toll in a similar period.

Unfortunately, death in Australia's wild places has not been confined to the high country. Rockclimbers and canyoneers died and were seriously injured in unprecedented numbers in 1985. All three rockclimbing deaths, and at least two falls which caused serious injury, resulted from falls on climbs which can be well protected. At least three canyoneers died in the Blue Mountains in abseiling-related accidents.

While our winters may lack polar severity, it is clear that Australia's alpine environment is seriously underestimated by many. The inaccessibility and appearance of the world's more jagged and icy ranges are in themselves warning to the unwary. The innocent and gentle curves of our own alpine landscape, however, belie the potential for winter savagery. It is perhaps the uncertainties and capricious nature of the natural environment, as well as its beauty, that sets wilderness adventure apart from mere sport. It can be expected that some of the increasing numbers trying these activities will not come back. The inexperienced, the ill-equipped and the unfit are particularly vulnerable. But, as some of the recent tragedies have shown, experience, equipment and fitness do not necessarily ensure a safe passage through our Alps in winter. Whilst the hazards cannot be removed, there is much that can be done to avoid needless accidents, and tragedy.

The hazards of rockclimbing, abseiling and canyoning are more obvious, and the consequences of even the slightest error can be, literally, sudden death. With the considerable recent growth in the popularity of these activities, it is inevitable that there will be some accidents, regardless of participants' preparations and precautions.

Understandably, grieving families and exhausted and inconvenienced searchers raise the familiar cry that 'they' 'do something about it'. Generally it is more restrictions and permits which are sought 'to save people from themselves'.

This, however, loses sight of the fact that safety in wilderness activities is a sensible compromise between inactivity and foolhardiness. In activities that are normally entered into voluntarily, safety for the individual is ultimately a matter of personal choice and responsibility.

Any attempt to impose external controls will almost inevitably debase the experience.

Rather than attempt to tame our wild places, or to restrict entry to them, we have a responsibility to ensure that all who enter them know the risks they may face. We must educate people to be aware of the dangers and how to face them.

It is the judgement based on experience gained in the mountains that counts. Experience teaches us to reliably and realistically assess

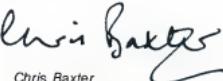


the dangers and to be prepared to meet and/or avoid them as appropriate. We can learn, for example, of the danger of hypothermia and how to avoid it, what to take and, as important, what to leave at home.

Many climbers would obviously benefit from education on 'why, when and how' to place effective protection. Similarly, a number of canyoning deaths might have been avoided if, on steep ground, belays were used between abseils.

This education is best obtained from competent specialist clubs, experienced private leaders and reputable professional instruction organizations. There is also a wide range of good literature to educate participants in wilderness activities.

Any attempt to regulate or restrict personal endeavour or expression in our wild places must be viewed as a backward step—and one unlikely to result in saving lives. •


Chris Baxter
Editor & Publisher



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Snow Deaths

Unprecedented winter toll

● **Snow Deaths.** An unprecedented number of ski tourers died in the Australian Alps last winter. On 6 August Stephen Crean, brother of Australian Council of Trade Unions President, Simon Crean, disappeared in bad weather whilst on a solo one-day ski tour from Charlotte Pass in Kosciusko National Park, New South Wales. At the time of writing he had not been seen since.

Later that month Melbourne teenagers, Xavier Clemann and Robert Harris, became lost while on a one-day ski tour at Mt Stirling, Victoria, and died of exposure. The same weekend two other teenagers survived a night without shelter in the snow after becoming lost on Mt Baw Baw, Victoria.

Finally, on 25 August, well-known Victorian bushwalking, conservation and Nordic skiing identity, Tom Kneen (who wrote 'Rate Yourself as a Gear Freak!' under a pseudonym for *Wild*



The Mt Feathertop cornice which claimed the life of Tom Kneen, right. Barbara Bryan and Tony Kerr

no 9), died after a cornice collapsed on Mt Feathertop, Victoria. Three others who fell with the cornice were lucky to escape unscathed. At the time of the accident Kneen was instructing a group in winter mountaineering.

● **Tom Kneen.** Tom joined Melbourne University Mountaineering Club in 1962 and developed a strong interest in bushwalking and conservation. He had a particular passion for the Bogong High Plains area and Mt Feathertop, which led to an interest in ski touring and mountaineering. In the mid-1960s he was very active in the construction of the MUMC hut on Mt Feathertop.

His philosophy that bushwalkers must be seen to care for the mountains found expression in various activities performed on behalf of the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs (VicWalk). These included a wide range of conservation issues, track and hut maintenance, the routing of the Alpine Walking Track, and the preparation of safety pamphlets. He was also an active member of the federation's search and rescue section.

Tom was particularly interested in people, and

devoted considerable energy to ensuring that everyone got together regularly for sing-songs, for discussions on bush and mountain lore, for parties in the bush, and so on. Over the years he built up strong links with National Parks rangers through track maintenance work. This interest in parks and his membership of the Victorian National Parks Association led him, in 1984, to form the Friends of Bogong National Park, a group which assists the Parks Service with various field projects.

He was a valued member of the pool of skilled volunteer leaders used by the Victorian Department of Sport and Recreation to run its

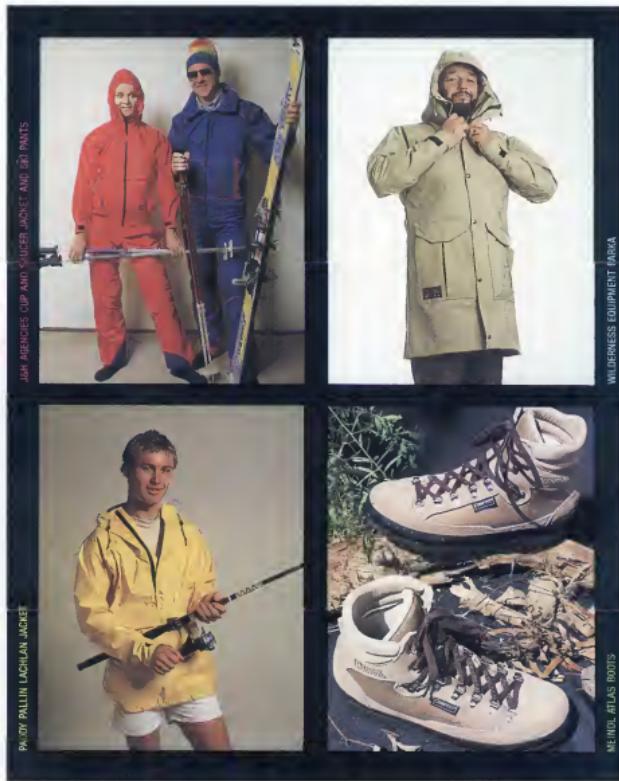
Bushwalking and Mountaineering Leadership courses, and was a regular and popular staff member at its Howmans Gap camps.

A memorial service for Tom on 10 September was attended by over 400 people, including family and friends, bushwalkers, ski tourers, conservationists, and colleagues from the Bureau of Meteorology, where he worked. It was a fitting tribute to a man who was an inspiration to many, who was well loved, and who was highly esteemed by those with whom he came in contact. Our sympathies are extended to his wife and family.

Phil Waring



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Rainforests Threatened

Conservation movement unified in last-ditch effort



Rainforest demonstration, Queensland style! Rosalind Perry

Daintree Action Urgently Needed. Conservationists are pressing for World Heritage listing for Queensland's greater Daintree wet tropics region to protect it from environmental threats. They are concerned over Federal Government delays in fulfilling its undertaking to have the area so listed. The Australian Conservation Foundation reports that only about 9,000 hectares of the Daintree's virgin rainforest remains, and that most of that is to be logged in 1986. Of major concern to conservationists are proposed expansions of timbering activities near the Daintree River, as well as real estate subdivisions and road-making north of the river. Readers are urged to write to their local (State and Federal) members of Parliament and to the Prime Minister (Parliament House, Canberra, ACT 2600) requesting urgent action.

Conservationists are outraged that trees from northern Queensland rainforests are to be used for politicians' office fittings in the lavish new Parliament House being built in Canberra.

The annual conference of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science, held in Melbourne in August, included a session on the status of rainforest in Australia and South-east Asia. The convenor, Peter Kershaw, said: 'It is considered that within man's history, nothing can compare with the pace and extent of rainforest conversion. Its biological consequences are far-reaching.' The session was chaired and introduced by Len Webb, a world authority on rainforest, who proposed a resolution, passed overwhelmingly, to be sent by ANZAAS to the Queensland and Federal Governments, that north-eastern Queensland rainforests be nominated forthwith for World Heritage listing.

Rockclimbing Deaths. There has been another death at popular Queensland climbing area Frog Buttress (see *Wild* no 11). A novice

was killed in a fall whilst leading the classic route Liquid Laughter Layback (16), a climb which can be well protected.

In the Wolgan valley, New South Wales (see *Reviews* in *Wild* no 18), an experienced UK climber, Gary Robinson, who had only recently arrived in Australia, was killed in a similar accident on Sizzler (19), a crack climb which can also be well protected.

Abseiling and Canyoning Accidents. Last winter there were two serious accidents involving abseilers in the Kanangra Walls area, New South Wales. Both resulted in the death of a party member.

The first incident involved a party of speleologists abseiling down Kanangra Falls. They were well equipped and had set out early. They were nearing the end of the canyon and had completed all the difficult abseils when a girl in the party apparently slipped above a drop. She may have thought she was clipped on to the rope—a non-screwgate karabiner was later found on a nearby ledge. She fell about 40 metres, suffering severe head and internal injuries. Some of her companions walked out and drove to Jenolan Caves where authorities were notified. By the time helicopters arrived, the girl had died.

The second incident involved a party of former army cadets who were attempting to abseil down a dry gully between Kanangra Falls and Kalang Falls. One of the party fell about 80 metres. Again it was a case of some of his companions having to climb out and drive all the way to Jenolan Caves to get help, but the victim died before he could be reached. Conditions were too windy for a helicopter to be used.

Both accidents highlight how dangerous abseiling in this region can be. This danger is magnified many times if the party is inexperienced. One extraordinary report involves a party that had set out to abseil Danae Brook canyon last summer but, without realizing it, started abseiling down Kanangra Falls. Not having ropes of sufficient length for this canyon, they were extremely lucky to meet another party and could use their ropes. The second party had a long and unpleasant trip looking after their unexpected burden.

Clastral Canyon was the scene for a well publicized rescue in September. An inexperienced party set out for the canyon, but, instead of going into Clastral Canyon, entered the system by Rainbow Ravine, the usual exit. They continued downstream, thinking they were going through Clastral Canyon, until they reached the Explorers Brook junction. They thought this was Thunder Canyon, and so, a little downstream, tried to climb out by what they thought was Rainbow Ravine. They were benighted and, during the night, one of the three-man party fell and was badly injured. The others went to get help. Police and bushwalkers had to search for the injured person as his companions were unable to remember exactly where he was. After a day's fruitless search, efforts were stepped up and he was found by bushwalkers the following day. Despite what turned out to be serious injuries, the victim was

in good spirits, and was taken out by helicopter. Dave Noble

Rally. On 12 October about 4,000 people met at Sydney Square and marched in support of saving the Daintree rainforest. The march was led by Bob Brown, Norm Sanders and actress Dianne Cilento, all of whom addressed the marchers at Hyde Park.

DN

Road Closures. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service has permanently locked the gate on the Narrow Neck Peninsula south of Katoomba. Similarly, the service plans to block the Mt Cameron Track, which leads off the Newnes Plateau into the Wollangambe wilderness. It plans to place a locked gate on this track at the Natural Bridge in order to prevent further abuse by four-wheel-drive vehicles.

DN

Prime Mover. The New South Wales Environment Centre has moved to new premises at 57 Wentworth Avenue, Sydney; telephone (02) 211 5366. The centre is lobbying the NSW Government in an attempt to get permanent premises in some historic terrace houses in Phillip Street.

The centre provides information to the public on environmental issues and acts as a base for a number of conservation organizations, including the NSW Federation of Bushwalking Clubs.

Roger Lembit

Peaked. The Three Peaks trip in the southern Blue Mountains, New South Wales, has long been a test walk for bushwalkers. It involves some 87 kilometres of walking and nearly 4,800 metres of ascent and 4,800 metres of descent. In August 1985 Peter Treseder reduced his July 1982 record of 16 hours 30 seconds to 15 hours 11 minutes.

His route was: Katoomba—Yellow Pup Ridge—Coxs River—Strongleg Buttress—Mt Cloudfaker—Mt Paralyser—Mt Guoguang—Mt Jenolan—the Gaspers—Carltons Head—Katoomba.

Beth Ferguson

New South Wales Park News. Two extensions to the Blue Mountains National Park were announced in September. The additions, totalling 30,000 hectares, will bring the park's area to almost 250,000 hectares. One addition, south of Katoomba, will bring the park up to the famous landmark, the Three Sisters. The other involves country around Mt Werong.

Sydney's Botany Bay National Park was established in November 1984 with an initial area of about 26 hectares. In September this was increased to 72 hectares.

Another Sydney park, Neilsen Park, has not fared so well. Because of vandalism it is now closed each night.

The establishment of the 5,640 hectare Mann River Nature Reserve, about 50 kilometres east of Glen Innes, has been announced. The new reserve is near the well-known Washpool and



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Nymboida National Parks.

The Ben Boyd National Park plan of management was released in August. The plan provides for a considerable expansion of tourist 'facilities' which is unlikely to be welcomed by conservationists. Copies of the plan are available from the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service; telephone (02) 237 6500.

● **Conference.** On 30 November and 1 December the National Parks Association of the ACT organized a conference 'to foster a co-operative approach to the conservation of alpine areas in Victoria, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory'.

● **Avon Descent.** This 133 kilometre, two-day, river race from Northam to Perth is an annual event billed by the organizers as 'Australia's white water classic'. The 1985 race attracted 800 competitors in a wide range of craft from one-man surf skis to high-speed power boats. The time for the first two-man Canadian canoe was 13 hours 28 minutes.

● **Bluffed.** The Ski Touring Association of Victoria reports that despite many assurances by the Department of Conservation, Forests & Lands that the Bluff Hut would be available to all on a first-come first-served basis, exclusive rights have been granted to a Mansfield-based, commercial ski touring organization for priority use of the hut, which is now nearing double proportions in both size and facilities, and boasts a sauna, accommodation for up to 40 people and a hot water service!

● **Zoning In.** The Ski Touring Association of Victoria has prepared a zoning plan for cross country skiing in Victoria. STAV claims the plan identifies the full range of cross country skiing opportunities in terms of desirable settings, including levels of access, facilities, use, management and safety.

The plan has been developed through consultation with the 31 STAV member clubs involved in a wide variety of cross country skiing from racing to remote touring, and tentatively applies zonings to ski areas in Victoria. The plan opposes the use of over-snow vehicles for recreational purposes.

● **Alpine National Park.** Legislation has been introduced into the Victorian Parliament which will lead to the proclamation of the long-awaited Alpine National Park. The legislation will allow for the staged proclamation of 690,000 hectares of parkland by 1995. (Parkland already existing in the Victorian Alps covers 395,000 hectares.) The new park will extend from the Victorian/New South Wales border to near Eildon Weir. Not surprisingly, there is strong opposition to these plans from logging and four-wheel-drive interests.

● **Woodchip Woes.** The report of the one-man (Ian Ferguson) Board of Inquiry into the Victorian Timber Industry, released in July, recommends the establishment of an export woodchip industry based on the forests of East Gippsland. The Australian Conservation Foundation considers 'this recommendation portends a great tragedy for the forest estate of Victoria if accepted by the Victorian Government'. The ACF has also written that 'the report is a triumph for the arrogance of

economism and a monument to the conceit that characterizes the forestry profession today'.

As the Victorian Government is using the report as the basis for its Timber Industry Strategy, the ACF urges readers to urgently write to the Minister for Conservation, Forests & Lands, 240 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002, requesting that the strategy be prepared by an independent agency, that those parts of the strategy relating to East Gippsland not be finalized until it has taken account of the Land Conservation Council review of land use

tackle one of the country's toughest runs—the 'Bogong to Hotham'. In 1984 five runners started but three withdrew at Watchbed Creek, near Falls Creek. The winner was Neil Hooper, who took 7 hours 14 minutes for the more than 60 kilometre run which involves 3,000 metres of ascent.

Russell Bulman

● **Thomson River Canoe Trail.** The Victorian Minister for Sport and Recreation, Neil Trezise, opened the Canoe Trail (see Track Notes this



White-water action in the 1985 Avon Descent. (The Avon Descent is an annual, two-day, 133 kilometre race from Northam to Perth). Nic Ellis

in the region, and that there be no woodchipping in East Gippsland. (Submissions to the LCC closed on 28 October.)

The same month as the Ferguson report was released, it was reported in the press that the Australian Council of Trade Unions had dumped the conservationist lobby and joined forces with forests products industry employers to reverse what they described as a "bias" within the Victorian Government against the commercial exploitation of timber resources'.

● **Skating Record.** Last winter Norwegian-born member of the USA ski team, Audun Enderstad, smashed the record for the classic Mt Bogong to Mt Hotham ski tour (see *Wild* no 9) when he skied from Mountain Creek to the Mt Loch car-park in a staggering 5 hours 53 minutes. Three other skiers started with Enderstad. Swiss Christine Brugger was the fastest of them, taking 8 hours 17 minutes for the trip. The following day Enderstad won the Charles Derrick Memorial Race on Mt Loch, and the day after that skied from Mt Hotham to Falls Creek!

● **Bogong to Hotham Run.** On 28 December about a dozen hardy runners will set off soon after dawn from Mountain Creek, Victoria, to

issue) on 4 October. The trail covers the stretch of the Thomson River in Gippsland from the Thomson Dam to Cowwarr Weir, a distance of some 80 kilometres.

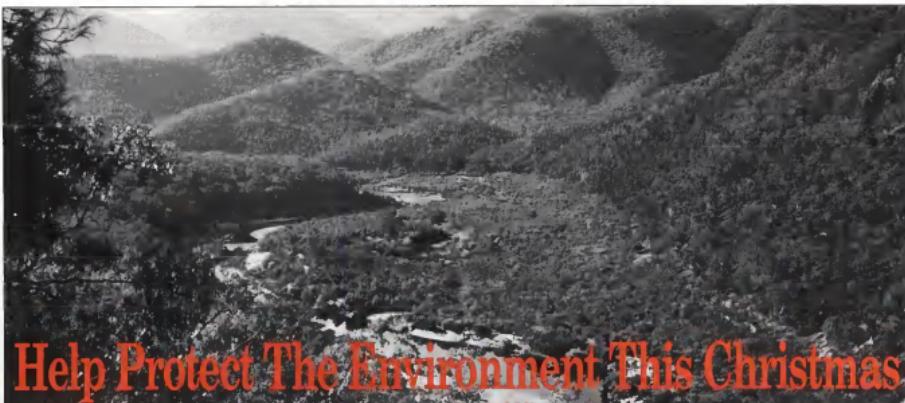
The project was co-ordinated by the Departments of Sport and Recreation, and Conservation, Forests & Lands, with the latter being responsible for ongoing maintenance and servicing of the trail. Specialist canoeing advice was provided by the Touring Committee of the Victorian Amateur Canoe Association.

Yvonne McLaughlin

● **Get With It.** To encourage greater interest in outdoor activities, Victoria's Department of Sport and Recreation has produced a set of 'Grow Through the Great Outdoors' brochures.

These include information for bushwalkers, canoeists and cross country skiers on how to get started and what clubs are available, as well as essential advice on walking in the mountains. Other brochures include details of leadership training and skills courses available in bushwalking, canoeing, orienteering, rockclimbing and ski touring through both educational institutions and commercial organizations.

For free brochures and further information contact the Department of Sport and Recreation, 570 Bourke Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000; telephone (03) 606 3200.



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Wild Information

• **Pulling the Plug.** Conservation group, Project Jonah, has announced that the Victorian Government has decided to withdraw its offer to invest \$500,000 in a marine park developers want to build at Keysborough.

Project Jonah's director, Stephen Whiteside, says his group approached the Premier's Department after reports that taxpayers' money was to be invested in the controversial park.

Dr Whiteside says the Government has confirmed that the offer has been withdrawn until an inquiry into the keeping of whales and dolphins in captivity is completed.

• **National Conference and Festival of Antarctica.** This was held at the University of Melbourne on 14-15 September by the Australian Conservation Foundation. Speakers included Barry Jones, Paul Broady, Bill Budd, Jim Bleasel (Director of the Antarctic Division), Dick Smith, Oliver Zakharov and Bill de la Mare.

Philippa Lohmeyer

• **The Grampians.** Published in October, the Grampians National Park Plan of Management has come down rather less heavily on bushwalking and, particularly, rockclimbing in the region than was foreshadowed in the Draft Plan of Management which received heavy criticism in the Editorial of *Wild* no 17 and from other quarters. In particular, the ill-conceived proposed bans on rockclimbing at Geranium Springs and in parts of the Wonderland Range have not been adopted. However, rockclimbing has been selected (along with horse-riding and motorized vehicle use, only) to be 'monitored' to determine its impact; a situation which suggests to climbers that Victoria's Department of Conservation, Forests & Lands has still to acquire a full comprehension of the nature of rockclimbing. Camping, however, is to be banned at Geranium (Brim) Springs and access 'rationalized'.

Bushwalking and 'dispersed camping' is relatively free of restrictions but neither is permitted in the Wonderland. Dispersed camping is not permitted in specified areas of urban water supply catchments but is allowed within 100 metres of the Major Mitchell Plateau Walking Track.

Commercial recreational activities are allowed in the National Park under certain conditions. The use of trail bikes and four-wheel-drive vehicles is subject to heavy restrictions.

Whilst a number of tracks are to be closed, there are plans to build and, particularly, to upgrade many tracks, roads, car-parks and other tourist 'facilities'. (There are already some 2,000 kilometres of roads and tracks in the National Park.) Almost a quarter of the park is available for logging! (Logging is to continue until mid-1994.) In addition, a number of quarries in the park are to continue operation.

• **Rare Animals.** New South Wales biologist, Robert Close, has found two brush-tailed rock wallabies in the Grampians, the first recorded sighting in a decade. Different forms of rock wallaby are found in separate regions on the east coast of Australia. Dr Close said the future of the Grampians rock wallaby looks grim. Their numbers are critically low and the programme of 'fuel-reduction burns' started by Grampians National Park Officers places other surviving colonies in jeopardy.

At nearby Mt Arapiles another 'rare' animal

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Downia are recognised experts in lofting with over 50 years experience in the field.

Our down not only meets or exceeds all conventional lofting values but is almost infinitely soft and long-lasting in its ability to contour itself to your body and to recover its full lofted volume after being compressed.

Shell and Liner Materials:

We use light, tough 1.9 oz down-proof nylon fabric for the job. This nylon is used exclusively on all outers, walls and on the inners of every bag, with the exception of the Treeline 620 where Downia use a superfine 2.2 oz cotton inner, accepting that the extra comfort is worth the slight (.3 oz square yard) additional weight.

Stitching:

All stitching is downproof. We use a special long-life high-strength thread compatible with the other high quality materials.

Shape:

The shape of a sleeping bag determines both the warmth and weight. Basically there are three shapes that a sleeping bag can be made in: Rectangular where the sides of the bag are parallel; Modified where the bag narrows towards the bottom slightly; or Mummy where the bag tapers to follow the body shape.



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Design/style	Fill weight	Total weight	Rating	Coastal 3 season	Mountain summer	Coastal winter	Mountain 3 season	Mountain winter	Ski touring	Expedition
620 Treeline Modified Rectangular	620 grams	1.6 kilograms	0° C	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	—	—	—
600 Treeline Mummy	600	1.3	-3° C	Good	Very good	Very good	Excellent	Acceptable	—	—
920 Snowfield Modified Rectangular	920	1.9	-8° C	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Very good	Acceptable	—
900 Snowfield Mummy	900	1.8	-12° C	Acceptable	Good	Very good	Very good	Excellent	Very good	—
1100 Glacier Mummy	1100	2.0	-20° C	—	—	Acceptable	Acceptable	Very good	Excellent	Excellent

has disappeared from the scene. Well-known denizen of the climbers' campsite, Gumbo (*Labrador salamis/itcher*), who was frequently seen in the Editor's company (see photo on page 3), died in August. She will be missed by many climbers who can now leave their food supplies undefended, and their tents unzipped without the fear of finding a wet and bedraggled old dog snoring in their expensive new sleeping bags.

Australian Canoe Federation 1986 Canoeing Calendar

Australian Slalom and White Water Championships: Tinanoo, Queensland, 3-12 January.

Australian Sprint Racing Championships: Westlakes, South Australia, 13-16 March.

Australian Marathon Racing Championships: New South Wales, Easter.

Australian Inter-club Canoe Polo Championships: South Australia.

Australian Interstate Canoe Polo Championships: New South Wales, December.

For further details contact the Individual State Canoe Associations listed in *Wild* no 15.

• **Wilderness Society News.** Written by Bob Brown and published by the Wilderness Society, *Lake Pedder* is an important new book which includes magnificent photos of the famous, now-flooded lake. A limited edition of 2,000 copies, it is likely to prove to be the definitive book on Lake Pedder and a collector's piece; RRP \$120. Contact the society for details; telephone (002) 34 9366.

This summer the Wilderness Society is organizing trips to Tasmanian wilderness areas, including Mt Field, the Douglas-Apsley region, the Weld River, the Gordon Splits and Cradle Mountain. Details are available from the society's new travel centre, in Melbourne; telephone (03) 67 5101.

A system of walking tracks through the proposed Douglas-Apsley National Park has been established by the (Tasmanian) East Coast branch of the society. The Douglas-Apsley area, on Tasmania's east coast north of Freycinet National Park, is the last unlogged stand of dry eucalypt forest in Tasmania.

A map has been produced by the society showing the main features of the area and the walking tracks. It is available from the Wilderness Shop, 155 Liverpool Street, Hobart, Tasmania 7000, for \$0.50, plus post and packing.

• **Woodchipping in Tasmania.** As we go to press, Federal Minister for the Environment, Barry Cohen, is considering whether to protect Tasmania's environment from woodchipping. (See article in this issue.) He is to make a recommendation to the Minister for Primary Industry, John Kerin. Cohen's decision is seen as critical for the survival of remaining forests, not only in Tasmania but throughout Australia.

The timber industry's final environmental

impact study into woodchipping in Tasmania took an even more extreme view than the earlier draft and recommended that the amount of woodchips to be exported be increased by a further 67,000 tonnes!

Whatever the Federal Government decides, the issue is expected to continue for many years. The Tasmanian Liberal Government is particularly pro-woodchipping, and the Australian conservation movement has unified in its opposition to the threat posed by woodchipping to Australia's forests.

Bob Burton

• **Undermining Tasmania.** In September Tasmanian conservation groups' objections to the granting of a mineral exploration licence to a mining company for the Tyndall Range in the proposed Western Tasmania National Park were thrown out of court. Under Tasmanian legislation, objections to exploration licences cannot be heard by a court unless the objectors have a 'proprietary' right to the land involved. The public interest, or even a financial interest through the publication of materials about the region in question, are apparently insufficient reasons for objections to be heard.

In addition, several companies have been granted exploration licences for part of the proposed Savage River Rainforest National Park.

BB

• **Power Crazy.** In August the Tasmanian Government outlined the Hydro-Electric Commission's proposed schedule for more dam construction in South-west Tasmania: the Sailor Jack scheme (on the King River) is to be completed by 1993, the Que and upper Meander River scheme by 1994, the Albert Rapids scheme (on the Gordon River) by 1995, the Huon River scheme by 1996 and the upper Gordon River scheme by 1997.

As most of these projects will take six or seven years to build, decisions concerning their construction will be made between now and 1990.

BB

• **Silica Quarrying.** In July a major industrial consortium announced its intention to establish a silicon smelter at Electrona, just south of Hobart. The consortium intends to quarry the silica at Grovers Bluff above the lower Weld River in South-west Tasmania. After the consortium encountered considerable opposition from local residents, it agreed to publicly release an environmental impact statement on the project, but the statement will not include reference to the quarry.

As the silica deposit at Grovers Bluff extends down to the river level, conservationists fear that the river will be polluted either directly or by the quarry waste eventually reaching the river.

BB

• **Cease Fire.** The Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service is erecting signs at the start of all major walking tracks in western Tasmania urging bushwalkers to carry and use portable stoves, rather than to use camp fires.

Tasmania's rainforests and highland areas are unique. Fire can destroy these areas forever as many of Tasmania's highland plant species do not regenerate after fire. Much of the State's ground surface, particularly in western

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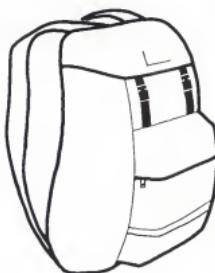


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Wild Information

Tasmania, consists of peat. Peat fires can burn underground for many months.

In recent years there have been several fires started by careless bushwalkers which have devastated large areas of rainforest and alpine vegetation.

BB

• **Rainbow Warrior Bombing.** A native American prophecy says, "When the earth is sick, the animals will begin to disappear and the warriors of the rainbow will come to save them".

Greenpeace gave the name *Rainbow Warrior* to the former fishing trawler which was to take part in anti-nuclear protests in the Pacific but was sunk by French agents in Auckland Harbour on the night of 10 July.

The explosion killed Greenpeace photographer/engineer Fernando Pereira. This loss of life, together with the loss of the ship and its valuable equipment, caused disruption of



Rainbow Warrior: mined in Auckland Harbour on the night of 10 July 1985. Greenpeace collection

Greenpeace's surveillance of the Pacific on environmental issues. However, a large ocean-going tug, the *Greenpeace*, will now go to Mururoa Atoll to undertake the *Rainbow Warrior's* task before heading south to establish a Greenpeace base in Antarctica.

Earlier on the night of the explosion a meeting of councillors from all Pacific-region Greenpeace offices had been held on board the *Rainbow Warrior*. The meeting finished just one hour before two large mines exploded on the ship's hull, sending her to the bottom of the harbour.

Pereira's was the first life lost in 15 years of Greenpeace campaigning on environmental issues. He leaves a wife and two children.

The Australian Convenor of Greenpeace, Mike Bossley, says, 'The loss of the *Rainbow Warrior* is a great blow to the organization. However, even if all our ships were sunk we would not think of stopping our campaign work. The fate of the earth is in the balance and a new *Warrior* will take the place of the old'.

Greenpeace is continuing its struggle against the slaughter of seal pups, whales and other

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marine life, the ocean dumping of toxic chemicals and nuclear waste, and nuclear tests in the Pacific.

Greenpeace is now seeking donations that will help meet the cost of salvaging equipment from the sunken vessel and help finance a replacement ship. Also, a trust fund has been established by Greenpeace to assist Fernando Pereira's children.

Donations can be sent to Greenpeace Australia, 310 Angas Street, Adelaide, South Australia 5000.

• **Ski Marathon in Mt Cook Area.** Three ski mountaineers completed an impressive journey in mid-September when they skied across the Main Divide of New Zealand's Southern Alps from the Mackenzie Basin to Westland in only 18 hours.

Well-known Tekapo-based guide, Gottlieb Braun-Ewert, together with Franz Waibl of Christchurch and visiting Swiss Daniel Frey, used German-made touring skis for the 47 kilometre marathon that involved 3,800 metres of ascent and 3,500 metres of descent.

The trio left Rankin Hut in the Godley valley half an hour after midnight, sking up Rutherford Stream to Armadillo Saddle on the Liebig Range. They skied the Harper Glacier into the Murchison valley before crossing Tasman Saddle at 10 am. From there it only took them six hours to reach Graham Saddle on the Main Divide at the head of the Rudolf Glacier.

After a speedy traverse of the Franz Josef neve, they crossed Newton Pass for the descent to Chancellor Hut above the Fox Glacier icefall, which they reached just before darkness closed in at 7 pm. They tramped down through the icefall next morning to reach the Fox Glacier township. This is perhaps the first time this route has been attempted in one continuous trip.

During the traverse they stopped for only half an hour to eat a light lunch of sandwiches and chocolate.

Colin Monteath

• **Overseas Climbing News.** The small Australian team which went to Shivaling, in India's Gangotri region, to attempt a major new rock climb (see *Wild* no 17), failed in its attempt but plans to return in April.

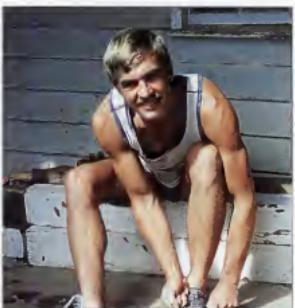
In 1985 the Army sent a seven-man team to three 6,000 metre peaks, Pisang Peak, Chulu West and Chulu East, north of the Marsyangdi valley in Nepal, near the Tibet border. These climbs are in preparation for its 1986 expeditions to Broad Peak (8,047 metres) in Pakistan, and Jannu (7,710 metres) in Nepal, and its planned ascent of the West Ridge of Mt Everest during the 1988 Australian Bicentennial Everest Expedition. (At the same time another Australian expedition, from the Australian Alpine Club, is to attempt Mt Everest by the South Col route and the two expeditions plan to descend each other's route of ascent, thereby each traversing the mountain.)

Stephen McDowell is leading the first major Australian climbing expedition to the USSR. Climbers interested in joining this 30-day expedition to the Pamirs, during which it is hoped to attempt Pic Communism (7,495 metres), can contact McDowell on (062) 58 8147.

The main news from the UK is the death of climbing 'legend', Don Whillans, of a heart

attack. (See *Rock* 1979 for an article on his only visit to Australia.)

Steve Monks, who lived in Australia in the first half of 1985 and is well known to local climbers, did an outstanding solo ascent of the North Face of the Eiger in Switzerland shortly after he left Australia last (southern) winter. His was



Eiger soloist, Steve Monks. Chris Baxter

only the second British solo ascent of this notorious face, which is yet to have an Australian ascent (roped or solo).

Louise Shepherd (see the cover of *Wild* no 4 and her article in *Rock* 1985), Australia's leading woman climber, is the talk of British rockclimbing after faultless ascents of two hard British climbs, Lord of the Flies (E6 or poorly protected 25/26) and London Wall (E5 or grade 25), which have been described as being significantly harder than any climb previously led by a woman in the UK. Shepherd recently returned to Australia where she runs a climbing school for women, Sheer Height, based at Mt Arapiles.

The manufacturer of the 'magic' rockclimbing protection device, the Friend, is to produce it in 'half' and 'three-quarter' sizes. (An Australian 'pirate' had the market for these two smallest sizes to himself for some years, hand-making excellent and much sought-after local models.) During his recent UK visit, the Editor examined prototypes at the Wild Country factory which, unlike the Australian version, have a stem of much the same dimensions as no 1 Friends but which is tapered to accommodate the smaller cams of the new sizes.

Barry Young has made a rockclimbing reconnaissance to the Gulin region of southern China. He reports countless unclimbed pinnacles of perfect white limestone in an uncommonly beautiful setting!

• **Papua New Guinea's Deepest Cave.** In 1985 the French Federation of Speleology mounted a most successful expedition to Papua New Guinea. Antipodes 85 unsuccessfully visited the Muller Range before turning its attention to western New Britain, an area with which it was better acquainted. The expedition finally bottomed the enormous river cave, Mine, at -470 metres. The most important feature of this cave is its impressive 200 metre deep entrance doline. Another subterranean river system with intersecting dolines was explored

from its several entrances to yield a total of 19 kilometres of passage. Near Pomic the expedition discovered and explored Muruk (cassowary in Pidgin) Cave to a depth of 628 metres. This makes it the deepest cave in Papua New Guinea, surpassing Mamo Kananda (-526 metres). Nettlebed Cave in New Zealand is still the deepest cave in the Southern hemisphere, and HH, a cave on the slopes of Mt Arthur and above Nettlebed, is supposedly 'finished' at a depth of 620 metres (see *Wild* no 15) and is therefore relegated to third-deepest this side of the equator.

Stephen Bunton

• **Australian Cavers in Europe.** Carey and David Barlow, Stephen Bunton and Mark Wilson joined the Lancaster University expedition to Tresviso in the Picos de Europa of northern Spain. This area contains Sima 56 (-1,169 metres) in which the four were involved in a rigging trip to -700 metres. The main accomplishment of the expedition was the exploration of Dossers Delight, which was extended from a known depth of 500 metres to 817 metres to make it the third-deepest cave ever explored by a British expedition. It was the Australians, though, who were in the thick of the exploration, leaving their mark on the survey with the Dame Edna Everage Memorial Sump at -804 metres.

Alan Warild soloed Sima GESM (-1,070 metres) near Malaga in southern Spain in 37 hours (a similar achievement to a solo ascent of an 8,000 metre peak). He later joined a French expedition to Austria which explored Vogelschaff to -760 metres. On a French expedition to the Haute Savoie he visited Reseau Jean-Bernard (-1,535 metres), the world's deepest cave.

All five Australians met at La Chapelle-en-Vercors in France for the eighth annual International Speleo Film Festival. With most of the screenings at night, they were able to visit local caves during the day. The Barlows, Bunton and Wilson joined the Imperial College (London) Caving Club for a trip down the Gouffre Berger to the final swim at -1,120 metres. Warild soloed the cave a week later.

Warild and Wilson completed a return trip to the bottom of Pierre St Martin (-1,342 metres), from the top entrance, in 52 hours. This is a very committing trip, which was only first completed by a French team in 1978. Warild and Wilson will be joining a French expedition to BU 56 (-1,338 metres) in the Spanish Pyrenees. This is the world's fourth-deepest cave and the deepest from a single entrance. The expedition intends to dive in the terminal sump.

SB

• **Corrections.** In *Wild* no 18 there was a reference to camp fires being banned in Victoria's Wilsons Promontory National Park. Apparently the ban only applies for five months each year, from 1 November, but a year-round ban is proposed in the draft plan of management due for release at the end of 1985.

The phone number in the Scobie's Walkabout display advertisement (it is correct in the Directory) in *Wild* no 18 should read (049) 23 025.

Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are most likely to be published. Send contributions to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 412, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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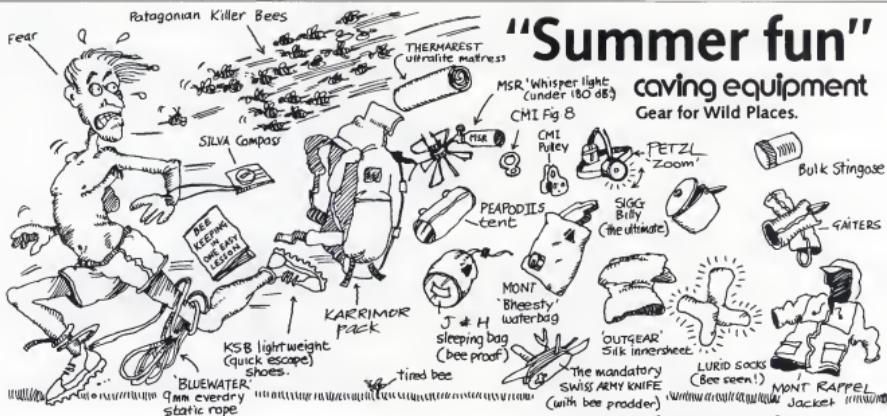
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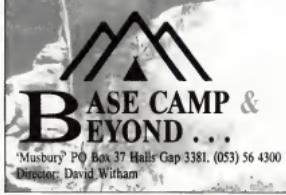
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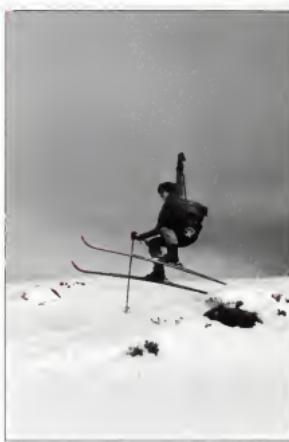
Transporting an Injured Skier

by Mike Grimmer

- WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF YOU OR SOMEONE in your party hurt himself while skiing in a remote area? It may be that the injured person would have to be moved to a more sheltered place to await rescue, or even to a road. How would you do it? How do you safely move an injured skier, someone who can no longer move unassisted?

It is possible for one person to carry another for short distances by simply sliding the injured person's legs through the shoulder-straps of an empty rucksack. You then put your arms through the straps and carry the person in the normal way you carry a rucksack. A rolled-up sleeping mat at the bottom of the straps, or extra padding, can make it more comfortable for the victim (Figure 1).

A seat can be made between two people by sliding the injured person's skis through his



A stretcher-case in the making? Trevor Wheeler

rucksack straps and seating him on the skis (Figure 3).

A stretcher can be improvised by laying a pair of skis on their edges, tips out, on top of a ground sheet or tent and then folding the ends over. The weight of the victim will keep the sheet from unfolding (Figure 4). Likewise, two zipped-up parkas with their sleeves turned inside-out can be turned into a stretcher by sliding the skis through the sleeves (Figure 5). The victim then sits on the stretcher and rests his back against



Figure 1



Figure 2



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Figure 3

the front carrier (Figure 2). The tips and tails of the skis can be slid through the carriers' rucksack straps, transferring the weight to their shoulders and freeing their hands.

You can wrap the victim in a tent, ground sheet, or bivvy sack, and simply pull him across



Figure 4

the snow. A sleeping mat under the victim will insulate him from the cold and lessen the drag.

Sleds can be improvised from skis and a length of cord. To facilitate this, you should drill holes in the tips and tails of your skis. This can be done at home with a 10 millimetre drill; the



Figure 5

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inside edges of the holes should then be sealed with epoxy. A length of cord (5.5 millimetre Perlon, sold in climbing shops, is light and strong and works well) should always be carried.

First put the tips of the skis together and spread the tails approximately one metre apart. Then tie each pole from one binding to the opposite tail (Figure 6).



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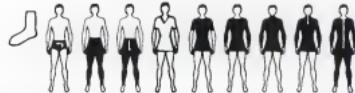
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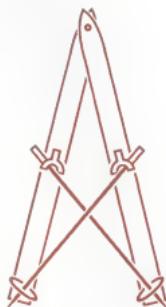


Figure 6

If more material is available, a sled with less drag can be made from two or more skis laid parallel. The poles are tied as above, and extra poles, sticks and pack frames are tied at different places along the length of the skis

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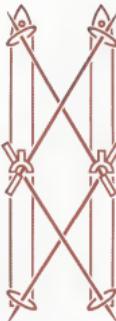


Figure 7

(Figure 7). Sleeping mats and empty rucksacks can be used for padding.

A day should be spent in the snow practising these methods, with friends as volunteer victims.

Points to remember: when carrying, or pulling a sled, try to transfer the weight to your shoulders; try to keep your hands free so you can continue to use your poles; coat your skis with a thick layer of soft wax to maximize grip and minimize glide; always carry a first-aid kit, sleeping mat, and bivvy sack when skiing, even on day trips. If a splint or restrictive bandage is applied, the reduced circulation increases the risk of frostbite so it must be loosened and reapplied occasionally. The victim must be kept warm and his condition monitored constantly.

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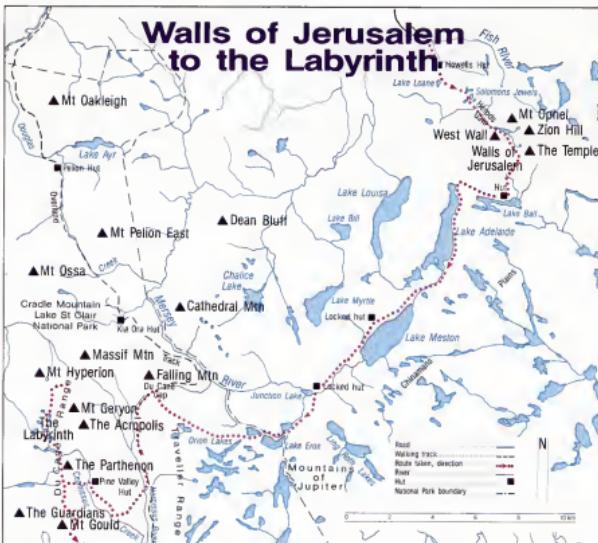
From Jerusalem to the Labyrinth

by Ted Plummer

• A QUICK GLANCE AT THE MAP REVEALED names too interesting to ignore: Solomons Jewels, Herods Gate, the Wailing Wall—all biblical in name, but their physical reality was far removed from the dry deserts where their names originated. The area was situated on the edge of Tasmania's Central Plateau—the Walls of Jerusalem. Three of us had planned the walk weeks before and as we were walking through light, cold rain towards Herods Gate our anticipation mounted. Our sudden entry into the Walls area was greeted by a gale-force wind and light snow. The West Wall was revealed only momentarily and only then shrouded in mist. Walking was very easy, with little or no scrub to bar the way. There are small huts but we opted to pitch tents in one of the small pockets of pencil pines beneath the West Wall. Although somewhat wet, it was a worthy campsite. The strong winds ensured that sunny breaks were rare; when the sun did come out, it was soon gone.

Night revealed a constant source of annoyance and entertainment in the Tasmanian mountains—brush-tailed possums. Our friend was a fine specimen, obviously fattened on the food of generations of bushwalkers. After trying to chase him away to no avail, we were forced to string our packs up between two trees and hence he could not walk a tight

It is not the dryest place on earth! On the track from Fish River, near the Walls of Jerusalem. Ted Plummer



rope. Even then he loitered around the camp, no doubt trying to remember how to untie slip knots and lower packs to the ground. Morning showed us he had abandoned his planned plunder and had probably set off in search of easier victims.

The Walls area offers great scope for exploration and we thought that climbing the West Wall would be a good start. The weather was much the same as the day before—cold and windy. Seemingly formidable, the West Wall is easily climbed by a gully between two obvious patches of pencil pines. There is a cairn at the top of this gully to mark the way down. On top it is a different world. Loose rocks and

alpine herbage dominate the scene while the 360° views are impressive. Patches of snow here and there lay testament to the weather contrast between top and bottom. Far off to the south-west we could see the jagged peaks of the Du Cane Range, our destination. Covered in snow, they looked threatening to say the least. What a magnificent sight it was to see the highest mountains in Tasmania arrayed before us—from Mt Pelion West to Mt Olympus. They were two days' walk away and we desperately hoped for some sunshine to melt their snow. After all, it was summer.

Although they were only some 20 kilometres away as the currawong flies, it was

to take two days' hard walking to reach the shores of lakes Ball, Adelaide and Meston. The lakes are beautiful and it was disappointing to note that some in the group are outside the Cradle Mountain - Lake St Clair National Park boundary. Our arrival at the Junction Lake saw a choice of two routes to Du Cane Gap. A well-earned rest day helped us to decide that

were actually hot. We camped beside Lake Cyane and watched the mountains put on an unforgettable display. As the sun set in the west, the Acropolis and Mt Geryon turned slowly orange and then seemed to suddenly catch fire as the sun disappeared.

The potential for day trips in the Du Cane Range is extensive. Brilliant skies

saw us setting off to have lunch on the peaks above Big Gun Pass. Troublesome scrub made for slow going in places, but once on the tops it was easy walking. There was even enough snow on the ground to make iced drinks. The views were again breathtaking. Lake St Clair stretched away southwards past the massive bulk of the Acropolis. The Traveller Range, which we had battled across only two days before, seemed insignificant. Mt Ossa dominated the north, and far away stood the Walls of Jerusalem. •

Reynolds Falls

by Grant Dixon

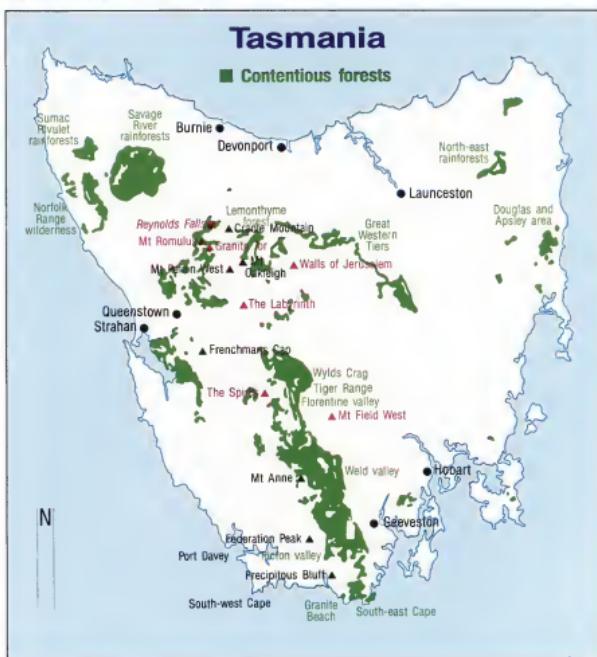
- REYNOLDS FALLS, ON THE VALE RIVER, is one of the most impressive waterfalls in Tasmania. Draining south-west from the Vale of Belvoir, the Vale River flows round the bulk of Mayday Mount into a narrow gorge, tumbles over several waterfalls, and then Reynolds Falls. A little further downstream the gorge opens out and the river flows onward, more slowly now, another five kilometres to join the Fury River.

In 1979 Ossie Ellis, then one of the owners of Cradle Mountain Lodge, after Left, crossing the Traveller Range. Ted Plummer. Right, Reynolds Falls. Grant Dixon

the thick scrub promised in the Mersey River valley was not for us. We opted to cross the Traveller Range which, as it turned out, was well worth it. The range consists of typical Central Plateau scenery—lakes and more lakes. The connecting streams were raging torrents due to recent heavy rain, so our rope proved handy. Untracked, the range is easily crossed in a day by picking your own way across it and avoiding the scrub as best you can, particularly the emerald-green deciduous beech tree. Walking through two metres of this plant is enough for a lifetime, as it grabs on to everything. After three metres you emerge completely naked, your clothing neatly distributed on the branches! (Be warned, too, that the Traveller Range has deposits of magnetic iron ore which can send compasses haywire.)

It was a strange experience to walk off the Traveller Range on to the Overland Track. I thought I had forgotten how muddy the track was. After a quick walk down the hill, hopping from tree root to tree root, we made camp at the Old Windy Ridge Hut site. A look in the New Windy Ridge Hut, a few minutes down the track, made us glad we had camped where we did. The hut was full to capacity.

Next day we were woken up by the sound of birds, to a blue sky. We were soon trotting off down the track towards Pine Valley. The walk beside Cephissus Creek was as beautiful and as wet as ever, and during the climb up to the Labyrinth we





considerable time and effort selecting the best route, cut and marked a track to the falls.

From the lodge the track follows a small creek, winding through open rainforest. Climbing to the windswept Fury Plains, a pole line then heads westward, Mayday Mount rising across the valley ahead. The route meets and follows a mineral exploration track, now badly eroded, for about three kilometres, before leaving this

intrusion and entering a patch of rainforest. After climbing through low baurea to the ridge above, the track descends through open rainforest to the aptly named Tumbling Creek, where the trunks of ancient myrtle trees are covered with multi-hued mosses.

Crossing the fern-fringed creek, the track climbs over a spur falling to the Vale River, then follows the southern slopes of the valley. Here and there the rainforest

pays homage to veteran eucalypts, some more than three metres in diameter, their bark thick and wrinkled with age.

Descending steeply below a cliffline, the track crosses a ferny gully to end on a natural platform above the Vale River, about five to six hours' walk from Cradle Mountain Lodge. The top of the falls can be reached by a blazed route starting just before the track starts to descend.

Water swirls round the boulders below, before being funnelled past a small vegetated island and out of sight down the gorge. However, it is to Reynolds Falls that the eye is drawn—gushing from a notch in a 90 metre rock wall, the river falls 60 metres into a horseshoe-shaped gorge.

The Reynolds Falls area is part of a concession within which a large forest-products company has rights to all pulpwood. A number of mining companies have also explored in the area. •



Granite Tor and Mt Romulus

by Grant Dixon

• SEVERAL THOUSAND PEOPLE WALK THE Overland Track through Tasmania's renowned Cradle Mountain - Lake St Clair National Park each year, and many more explore other parts of the park. However, few visit the wild, and unprotected, country further west.

Between the Murchison and Mackintosh Rivers, both dammed for hydroelectric schemes, lies a dissected plateau dominated by the flat-topped bulk of Granite Tor. To the north, rainforest-clad Mt Romulus rises 600 metres from the dark slash of the Fury Gorge. Here grow probably the largest king billy pines in the State—massive forest veterans, almost three metres in diameter.

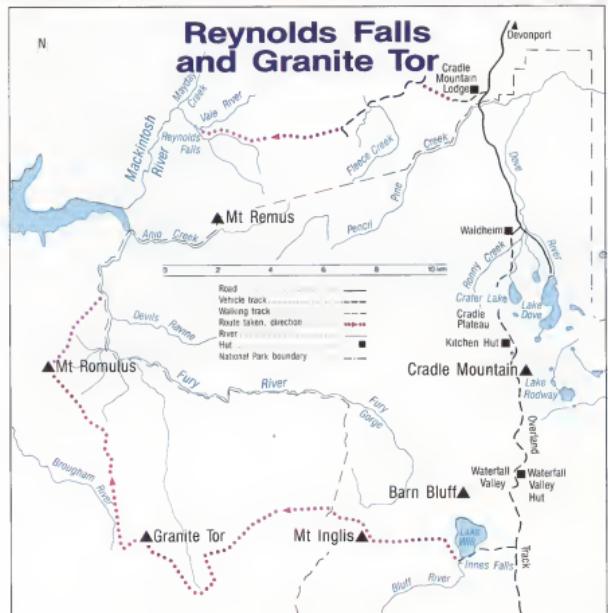
To reach the country near Granite Tor, or the more remote Mt Romulus, requires a climb over Mt Inglis followed by a day or two grappling with the vegetation.

Explorer Henry Hellyer and party, battling a blizzard, crossed this country in November 1828, and it has changed little since. In 1896-97 EG Innes and party cut a track through the region to the mining camps on the west coast.

From Lake Will, in the Cradle Mountain - Lake St Clair National Park, a few rotting and wind-sculptured poles mark the route of Innes' track westward across button grass. Small creeks burble southward, sometimes flowing over sandstone escarpments as small, but spectacular, waterfalls. Patches of rainforest shelter beneath these cliffs.

The climb up Mt Inglis is forested. To the north of sandstone cliffs fall towards

Tumbling Creek and, right, a pandani 'family' near Granite Tor. Grant Dixon





the Fury River, with native pine and deciduous beech lining the intervening terraces. A broad ridge trends westward from Mt Inglis. Here the route of Innes' track is still discernible through the alpine vegetation despite the passage of many decades since hooves trod this way.

Descending slowly one crosses, somewhere, the 'pencil-and-ruler' boundary of the Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park. A dissected and windswept plateau stretches away to the west—open button grass plains and scrub-filled gullies, copsees of alpine eucalypts and close-knit pandani 'families', hummocky moraines and scattered granite erratics.

Granite Tor is a remote, flat-topped mountain, its summit covered with low, wiry alpine vegetation. From the east, the approach follows a broad ridge, the formation of Innes' track just discernible amongst the tangle of baurea and ti-tree. The descent from the Tor is similarly guarded by entanglements of baurea, cutting grass and eucalypt regrowth.

Mt Romulus lies beyond the open unnamed ridges to the north—reached only after a further struggle through a patch of rainforest best suited to a gymnast, and tedious plod through low baurea, before the final ascent through open rainforest. Ancient king billy pines are common here—one of the most significant unreserved stands in Tasmania.

The descent to the Fury River is steep, and through massive horizontal scrub in many places. The Fury River is a pleasant stream, with dark forested slopes rearing upwards from its cobble bed. However, it is a torrent more appropriate to its name after a period of rain.

Mt Romulus is covered by a mineral exploration licence, and cut survey lines with plastic tape and other rubbish from previous mineral exploration activities are found near Granite Tor. •



The Denisons and the Spires

by Roger Lembit

• THE FLORENTINE RIVER FLOWED silently past our lunch spot, threading its way through a seemingly interminable log jam. Tony and I ate slowly, taking in the surroundings, our first lunch in Tasmania that summer.

We had hitch-hiked from Hobart that morning, leaving the Strathgordon Road near the Needles. Our ultimate destination was the Lyell Highway via the Denison, Spires and King William ranges.

Arriving at Gordonvale shortly before dusk, we found two Tasmanians already at the campsite. The night was spent

'Before' — threatened rainforest in the Weld River area.
Rob Blakers





The Great Forest Rip-off

Geoff Law

• TASMANIA IS AUSTRALIA'S CLEAR-FELL CAPITAL. More woodchips are exported from Tasmania than from the whole of the rest of Australia. Add this to the large Tasmanian sawmilling and paper-making industries, and it means a lot of trees being cut down. In fact, over 22,000 hectares of forest are clear-felled in Tasmania every year—that's the size of a 'football oval' 16 kilometres in diameter!

You can imagine the implications of this onslaught for such a tiny island. In the east, much of the natural woodland has been cleared, burnt and replaced with even-aged stands of commercial regrowth. Poor soils and the inappropriateness of the clear-fell technique have resulted in numerous regeneration failures. In the west of the State, forestry operations are destroying and threatening two of Tasmania's greatest natural assets—wilderness and rainforest.

The Weld River flows south-east from some of the highest peaks in South-west Tasmania. Mt Anne is a grandstand which overlooks the whole upper valley—a magnificent rainforested wilderness. It is not in a National Park nor part of the official World Heritage Area. Not because it is not of World Heritage value, but because it has stands of commercially valuable timber and has been earmarked for intensive logging.

The same applies to forests near Granite Beach, at South Cape Rivulet and at South-east Cape on the famous South Coast Track, as well as the forests that blanket the northern slopes of serrated Mt Oakleigh overlooking the famous Overland Track. The valleys of the Cracraft and Pictor Rivers, near the remote spire of Federation Peak, are also under threat from logging. If these operations go ahead, half of the western Tasmanian wilderness would be destroyed.

Tasmanians are used to hearing statements from the woodchip industry claiming that 'Tasmania's forests can be used for wood production without significant adverse effects on the environment'. The major companies concerned promote themselves heavily through Tasmania's single commercial television network. They 'bring Tasmania' various full-length films, sporting events, and even the weather. Their advertisements claim that every precaution is taken to protect Tasmania's environment, and that after forest has been cleared 'even more trees' are planted to give Tasmania employment, security, happiness and so on. Market research indicates that the ads are apparently effective.

They might be less effective if native animals watched television. Much of our wildlife needs old forests. It takes trees over 150 years to form tree-hollow nesting sites for animals such as pygmy possums, sugar gliders, cockatoos, bats and owls. Tasmania's forests are managed on an 85-year rotation. This means that they are chopped down

every 85 years—so that they never grow old. So as well as eliminating the great forest gums, we are losing tiny species such as the pygmy possum—an animal whose history goes back over 120 million years. Because our forests are being treated mainly as a source of timber, they are losing their life-giving diversity and natural beauty. And this destruction of our forests is not restricted to Tasmania.

Majestic stands of tall karri forest are being woodchipped in south-west Western Australia. On the south coast of New South Wales, near Eden, a massive woodchip export scheme is clear-felling over 2,000 square kilometres of eucalypt woodland. Woodchipping for export has been extended to the north coast of New South Wales. In Victoria, wilderness in the Alps and East Gippsland has been destroyed by logging. The Oways and East Gippsland are threatened by woodchipping for export. Irreparable harm is being done to the tropical rainforests of Daintree and Downey Creek in Queensland. Against this background, forest destruction is seen by conservationists as a national problem, one needing remedial action at a national level.

Conservationists see Tasmania as being particularly important in this issue because it is a precedent for the rest of Australia—the Federal Government is considering whether to renew export licences to woodchip companies in Tasmania after 1988. Without such licences they cannot continue to export woodchips to Japan. Even if the licences are granted, the Federal Government can impose considerable restrictions on logging as conditions of the licences. Federal Government decisions on woodchipping will follow for New South Wales and then Western Australia.

Because of the importance of this issue, conservationists have launched a campaign to make Australia's forests a national issue—an issue with which they believe the Federal Government must contend. Conservationists see Tasmania as the focus of this campaign—by encouraging the Federal Government to protect Tasmanian forests they believe they can achieve a major victory for forests and wildlife throughout Australia. Time will judge the validity of this assumption.

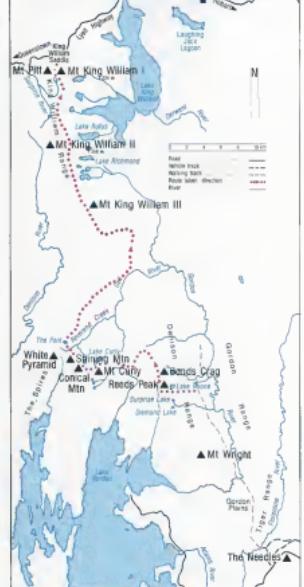
The single most important thing readers can do is to write to John Kerin, Minister for Primary Industry, Parliament House, Canberra, ACT 2600. Emphasize that the future of Australia's forests is a Federal Government responsibility. Ask that Tasmania's wilderness be protected, and that the Forest Action Network's proposals for management, National Parks and employment be adopted. Readers are also asked to write to their own local Federal Member of Parliament, to Prime Minister Bob Hawke, and to Barry Cohen, Minister for the Environment. ●

swapping yarns, cooking and sharing cups of tea, followed by a well-earned sleep.

The fine weather continued the next day and, rising early, we left before the others. There was a steady slog across the button grass, interspersed by battles through ti-tree-infested creeks until we reached the spur we planned to ascend. The log book at Gordonvale warned of the folly of missing the right spur, so we carefully checked our bearings. Wyld's Crag rose majestically to the north-east, the hot summer sun beating down on its fluted columns.

We slowly climbed up the steep ridge, cursing the weight of our heavily laden

The Denisons and the Spires



packs. The ridge, fortunately, was very open with low heath and the odd banksia and we steadily rose above the plain known as the Vale of Rasselas. Here and there wildflowers dotted the hillside; boronias, ti-tree and sundews were amongst the quartzite.

Finally, at the top of a rise we caught our first glimpse of it—a shimmering jewel, bordered to the north by a long strip of gold and backed by a massive wall of quartzite—Lake Rhona. These were the days before an intentional 'hazard reduction' burn had escaped from the east and destroyed much of the area's charm. The golden sand beach was then backed by luxuriant vegetation and there were king

Above, 'after' — comforting advice from Tasmania's Hydro-Electric Commission; Stuart Lennox. Right, Lake Rhona, in the Denison Range. Roger Lembit



billy pines dotted along the shore.

That afternoon we made our way across to the southern shore and up a steep gully to reach the crest of the Denison Range. After a quick trip across the open moorland to the Great Dome we headed south to investigate Lake Surprise and Diamond Lake, both aptly named. At about 6 pm we turned to head back to our campsite near the beach. Shortly afterwards we heard voices behind us and looked back to see the two Tasmanians we had spent the previous night with at

Standing quietly, I contemplated the surroundings. The waves on the lake crashed more aggressively on the shore, the lake itself stretching away for a considerable distance. On the left the now-dark slopes of Mt Curly formed an imposing barrier. The sky was plastered in stars, and wispy clouds raced across the sky. I was struck by a sudden realization of remoteness and a feeling of being stranded in some alien environment. No drug-induced stupor could have given me a greater sense of awareness of the

lack of traffic, and eventually walked most of the way to Derwent Bridge. •

Whilst all of the area we had travelled through is within the South-west Conservation Area of Tasmania, very little is within a National Park. The Denisons and Spires were excluded from the Wild Rivers National Park because of mining interests and future hydro-electric potential. Recently the Hydro-Electric Commission announced that another two dams are planned for the Gordon River, one of which would certainly flood the Vale of Rasselas. •



Lake Newdegate and the Rodway Range. Leo Sexton. Right, denizen of Tasmania's threatened forests, a brown goshawk. Wilderness Society collection

Gordonvale. Apparently they had headed up on to the range far too early and got caught in bad ti-tree scrub. Tony and I secretly congratulated ourselves on our careful navigation as we commiserated with the others' misfortune.

After visiting Reeds Peak and Bonds Crag the next morning we left the Denisons for the long march across the button grass to Lake Curly. We met the scrubby section whilst coming down off the Denisons below Bonds Crag. Once through this, only the occasional scrubby creek slowed progress and we reached Lake Curly with about an hour of daylight to spare.

Lake Curly is a long, narrow lake bounded on the eastern side by the steep, scrub-covered slopes of Mt Curly. The normal approach is up the Gell River which flows northwards from the lake, eventually joining the Gordon River. There is a small number of campsites at the north-eastern end of the lake, near where the Gell River begins.

The weather was calm and clear as we sat beside our small fire, waves gently lapping the shore of the lake which was just behind a thin barrier of scrub. It was New Year's Eve.

intricate complexity of my surroundings and the insignificance of my own place in this setting. It was the perfect way to spend a New Year's Eve.

We had decided to head straight across to the Spires Range, avoiding Conical and Shining mountains. This proved to be relatively easy, the country being mainly open, although the occasional patch of scrub impeded progress. We had lunch on Reverend Creek, below the Spires, after having disturbed a couple of tiger snakes basking in the sun, which by now was shining for increasingly longer periods.

We reached the Font, a small lake perched between towering walls of quartzite, in mid-afternoon. We tested the near-perfect echo in this amphitheatre with various yells. The reports we had heard proved true, the echo against the cliffs of the Flame reproduced most sounds accurately, even the dull clang of spoon against billy.

The White Pyramid, a conical quartzite peak southwards along the range, was for us an irresistible goal. Outstanding views of Frenchmans Cap are an attraction of the summit, which is most easily gained by the east side.

The King William Range is predominantly alpine moorland with few patches of scrub. On descending to the Lyell Highway we were disappointed at the

Mt Field Reflections

by Leo Sexton

IT WAS MAY, CERTAINLY NOT THE BEST time of year to be walking in Tasmania. John and I were heading towards the great South-west, but that was not our destination. We were to spend five days in the Mt Field National Park, which is situated just off the Gordon River Road, north-east of Maydena. I had passed Mt Field before, without even noticing it, because I was so preoccupied with 'hard walks' and remote, inaccessible places. This trip was to be different.

The nearest hut we could stay in was at Twilight Tarn, so we decided to head there. The track was well marked, although rocky. Lake Seal, then Lake Webster, slipped by us quickly without providing much of a view. Then we started to gain a little altitude, and finally came out on to a level step on the side of this rising ground. Nestled on this step is Twilight Tarn, which is about 200 metres long and 80 metres wide. At the end of the tarn is one of the most remarkable huts I have seen. The hut was built in the 1930s by the Tasmanian Ski Club, and has recently been restored. During the restoration some of the original ski club equipment was discovered under the hut. These relics have been mounted with informative notes in one of the rooms of the hut, our own little museum. The hut has three rooms in all, and front and back doors. We decided to make the hut our home-away-from-home, our base camp, for the next few days.

Our first planned day excursion was to take us up past Twisted Tarn to Lake Newdegate, then up and over Newdegate Pass to turn and walk parallel to the Rodway Range to K Col. Then, depending on time, we could explore the other side of the col towards Mt Field West. It was a sunny day, which we appreciated more as we came out of the eucalypt forest into more open vegetation of pencil pines, small bushes and grasses near Twisted

Tarn. Lake Newdegate has the Rodways soaring up from its western shore. On the slopes above the lake the deciduous beech had turned, which gave the slopes a golden-brown look. Cairns and red paint lead through the boulder field to the top of Newdegate Pass which is littered with tiny tarns and cushion grass. At this point, the pass and the east side of the Rodways was in glorious sunshine and stayed that way for the rest of the day. By contrast, the west side was covered by thick mist and low cloud. Being optimistic, we trusted the mist to lift soon. Of course it did not, and the next time we saw the sun was back at the pass on our return. The west side of the Rodway Range is mostly one boulder field after another and we soon discovered that boulder-hopping is not the safest thing in the world, particularly on wet or icy boulders. Eventually, we reached K Col but without much enthusiasm to go any further. It can be quite frustrating to be cold and able to see only 20 metres ahead when you know that 500 metres to the east there is a sunny autumn day.

Two days later the skies cleared to reveal a perfect day and we spent the afternoon on Tarn Shelf. This area is one of the best of its kind and is only five kilometres from Mt Field West itself. From Lake Newdegate Tarn Shelf extends southward, rising gradually for about three kilometres. There are about ten major tarns and many smaller ones. To the west are the rocky Rodways, and to the east steep drops down to Lakes Seal and Webster, giving bird's-eye views of both lakes. On Tarn Shelf I could not walk 100 metres without taking my camera out, or at least having to resist the temptation.

We spent the following afternoon on Tarn Shelf, this time in foggy weather conditions. It was the same location as the previous day but a totally different scene. The burnt and weathered copse of silvery pencil pines had a ghostly appearance in the still mist. A flock of large black ravens perched in the dead trees, their eerie cries and the flap of their wings in the still air gave the place an uncanny feel. It was fascinating to see the same area under different weather and lighting conditions. This is one of the rewards of moving slowly and staying put for a while. You do not always need to move on for a change of scenery, you can just stop and let it happen around you.

Mt Field National Park left me with the impression of an extraordinarily beautiful and vulnerable area. It does not have the natural protection of a large area of buffer zones. It is only 16,977 hectares or roughly 15 by 10 kilometres. In 1949 a large area was excised from the park for woodpulping. This area included some of the world's tallest flowering trees. Logging around the park, the risk of fire, easy access and over-use, all add together to threaten this fragile environment. I hope the unique beauty I had the privilege to see on this trip will survive indefinitely, but I am not sure that it will. •



The Western Tasmania National Park

Grant Dixon

• THE BATTLE TO PROTECT THE WILDERNESS OF western Tasmania did not end with the High Court decision that saved the Franklin River. Of the area worthy of protection, less than half has current National Park or World Heritage status. Much of the rest is under imminent threat from hydroelectric, mining and forestry interests.

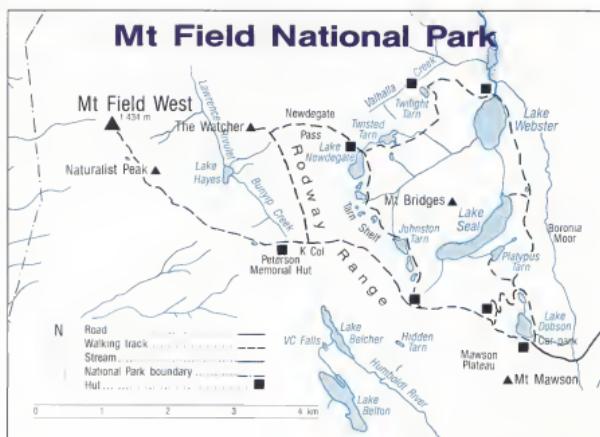
In March 1984 the Wilderness Society launched a proposal for a 1.8 million hectare Western Tasmania National Park that would protect all the remaining wilderness in Tasmania's Central Highlands and South-west. The proposal includes recommendations for the restoration of wilderness in some areas where it has recently been damaged.

Outside the existing National Parks in western

Tasmania, and currently unprotected, lie such outstanding areas as the Denison and Maxwell valleys, the Spires and Denison ranges, the Gordon Splits, the Elton and Tyndall ranges, the Picton, Weld and Huon valleys, Mt Bobs, South Cape Bay and the glacial lakes country of the western Central Plateau.

The declaration of a Western Tasmania National Park would ensure the preservation of this magnificent region as a permanent asset for Tasmania and a cultural heritage for future generations.

For further information contact the Wilderness Society at 130 Davey Street, Hobart, Tasmania 7000; telephone (002) 34 9366. •



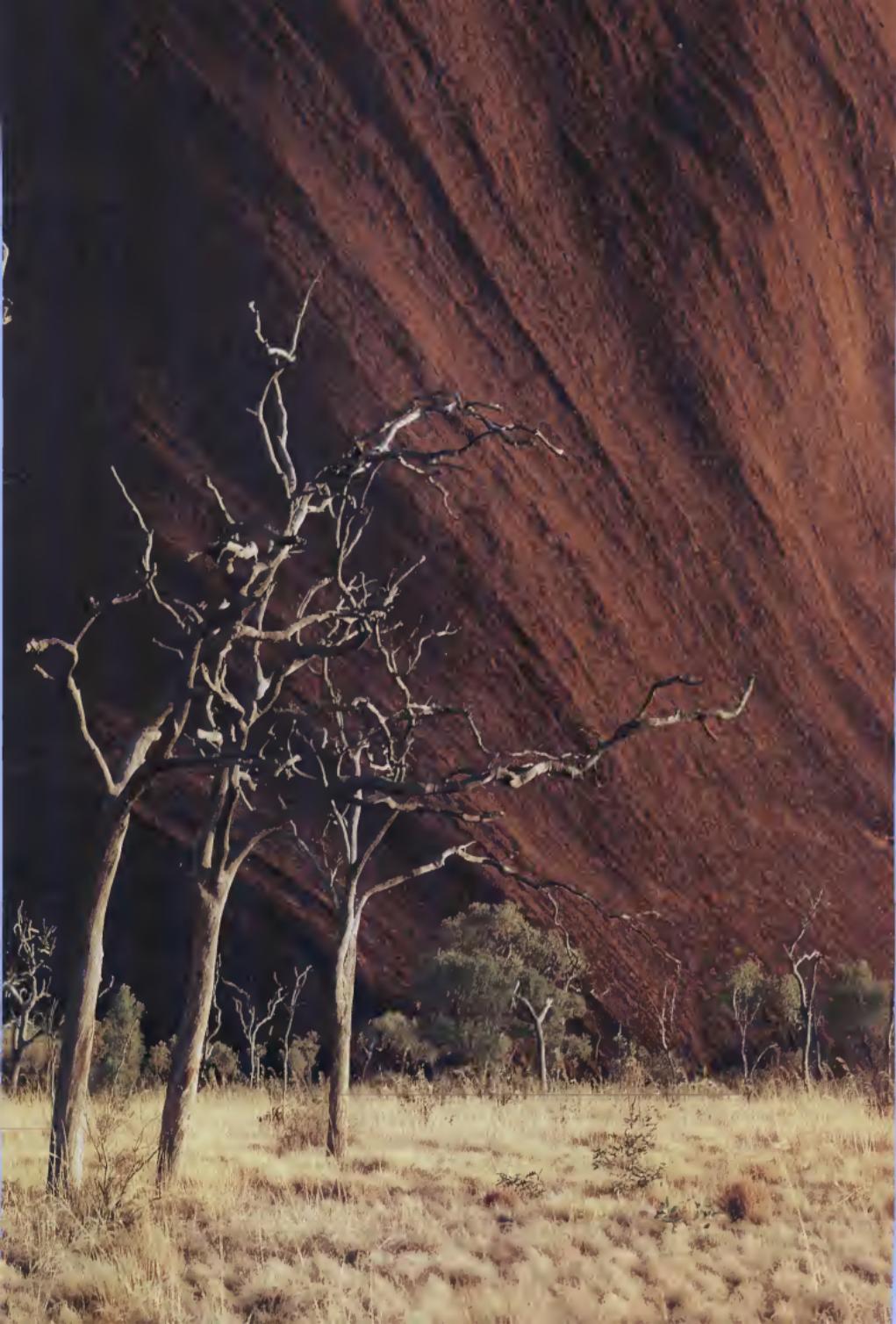
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Ayers Rock region, Northern Territory.

**Heinz
Zak**

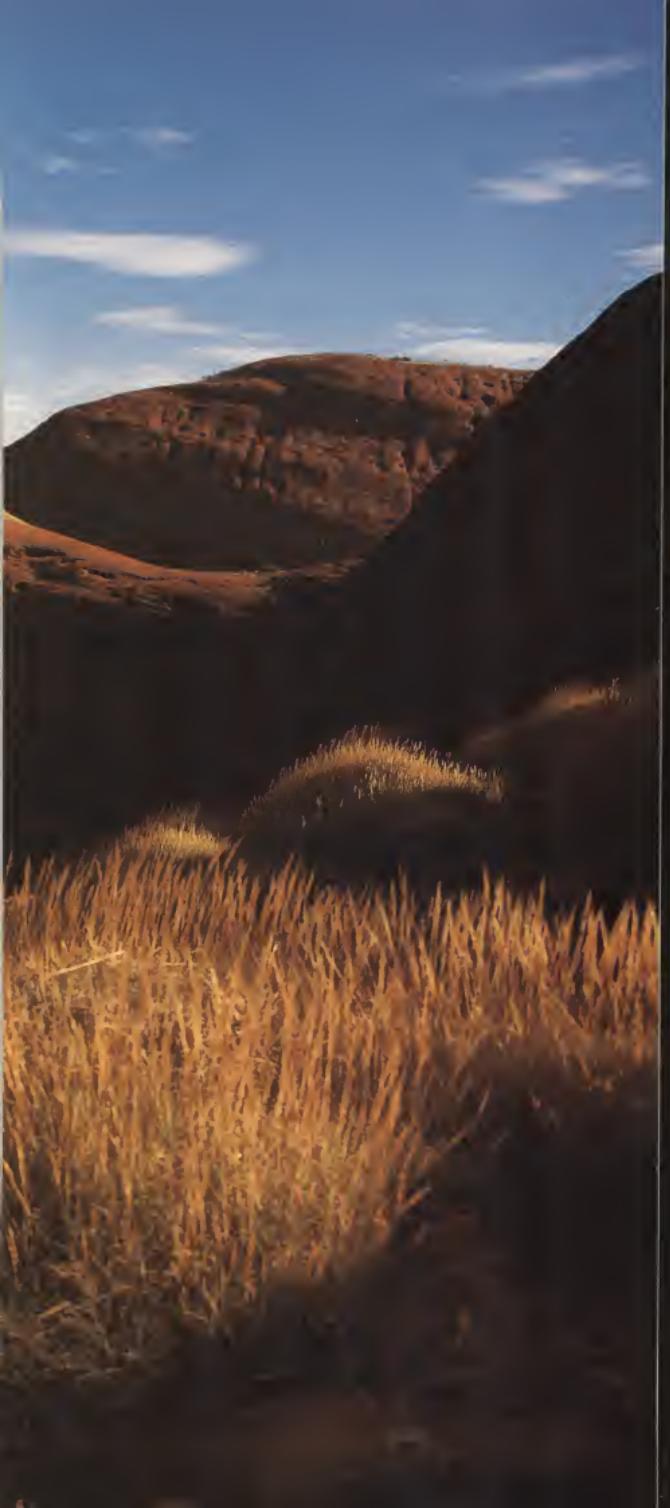








The Olgas, Northern Territory.



KIWI ICE



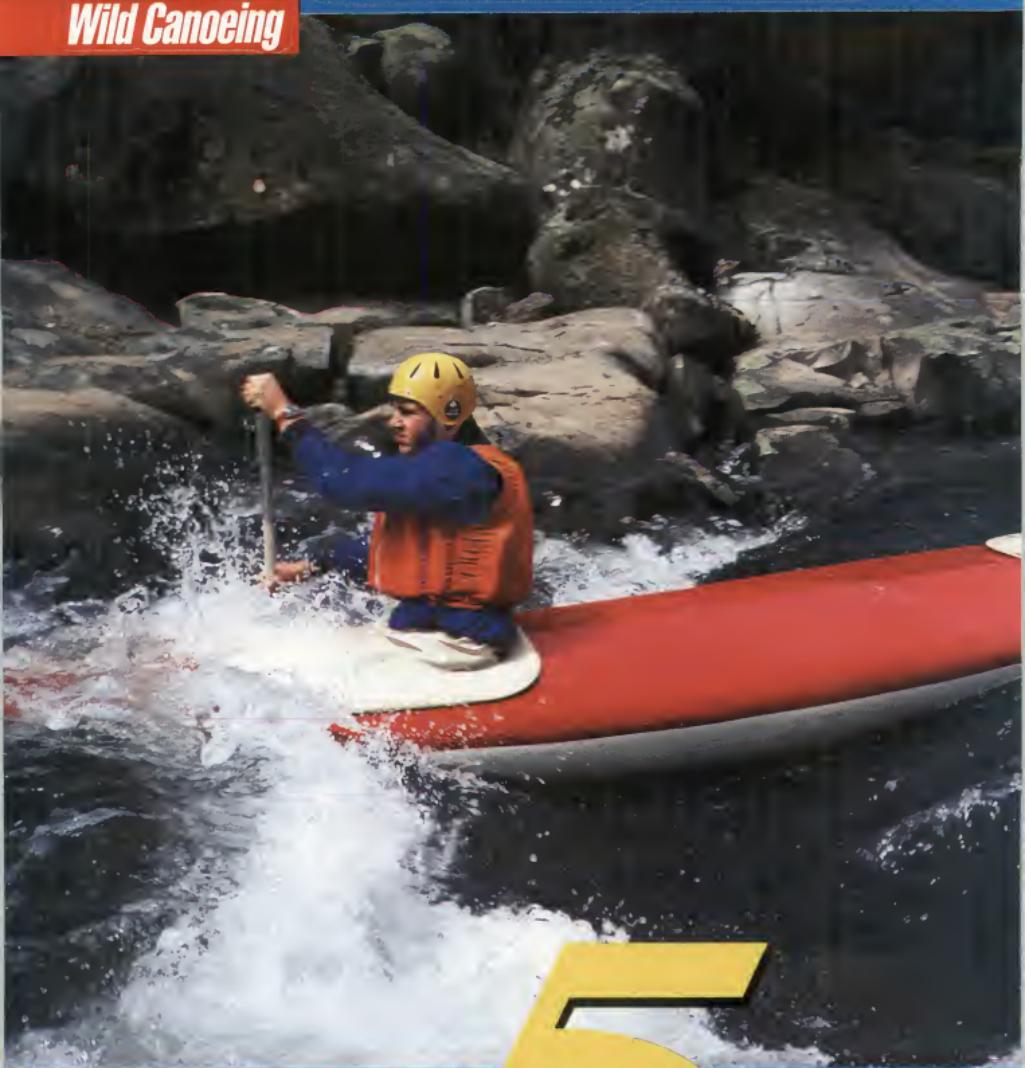
Perfect conditions on the South-west Ridge of Mt Aspiring, one of New Zealand's classic ice climbs. Glenn Tempest. Right, astride nearby Mt Avalanche. Geoff Wayatt. Following spread; left, on Mt Madelaine in New Zealand's Fiordland region. Wayatt. Right, Glenn Tempest's photo gives an indication of the scale of the peaks in the Mt Cook National Park — three climbers can just be distinguished in the centre of the photo, below the middle couloir of Mt Dixon.







Wild Canoeing



5 of the
Yvonne McLaughlin ch



• AUSTRALIA IS LUCKY IN HAVING A HUGE number of rivers, creeks and lakes. Equally important, we have free access to almost all of this water. Many countries are not nearly so well endowed, and, as well, allow private ownership of rivers (as in the UK), which severely restricts the opportunities for recreational canoeing.

Because of geographical and climatic differences, each State can offer something different. The range is enormous, from icy rock-strewn mountain rivers to wide, slumberous mangrove-lined estuaries.

Victoria has a large number of canoeable waterways. The *Canoeing Guide to Victoria* lists 55 rivers and 46 lakes, and the editors write that that is by no means a complete list!

Picking 'five of the best' was not easy (no correspondence will be entered into over the choice of venues!) but, in alphabetical order, here goes...

Barmah Forest

This is a delightful area teeming with birdlife, and is suitable for beginners and family groups, for short or extended trips.

The Barmah Forest, on the Victorian side of the Murray River, is a 28,500 hectare area of reserved forest. Stretching from Morgans Beach to Barmah, it is Victoria's largest river red gum reserve, and is a haven for a multitude of native animals and birds. It is an area of reedy lakes and swamps, which during very high water becomes completely awash.

The river distance from Morgans Beach to Barmah is over 150 kilometres, and takes about four days to paddle. However, it is more interesting to set up a base camp and make day trips into the forest, rather than just paddle along the boundary.

At almost any level it is an enjoyable trip, and just about any boat will do. The water is sheltered from the wind, and offers easy paddling with plenty of interest along the way.

The variety of birds (over 200 species have been recorded in the area) soon makes every member of the group an avid bird spotter. There is nothing quite like turning a corner and seeing a nesting colony in the reeds, or seeing ibis and pelicans feeding, or surprising a couple of platypuses. Large mobs of grey kangaroos

Enjoying the ride on the Buffalo River. All photos Chris McLaughlin

and flocks of emus are regularly seen. The huge river gums overlooking the quiet water evoke a feeling of tranquility.

The special magic here is that you can get really close to the birds, and if you do not make any noise or sudden movements they do not fly away.

Paddling through the forest when it is in flood can be a strange, eerie feeling, particularly in those places where the sun barely penetrates. But this is the time to see the most wildlife.

To fully appreciate the area it is best to plan a trip which includes sections of the river, the reed beds and the forest. Take a good supply of film, as it really is a photographers' paradise, and plenty to drink, particularly on hot days.

A word of warning: because the area has such a similar appearance over its huge expanse, it is easy to become 'geographically embarrassed'. If you plan to move off the river, always carry a compass and attempt to remember landmarks.

The Barmah Forest is a delight for all age groups and it makes no difference if you have had no previous interest in ornithology or if you do not normally paddle on flat water. The sights, sounds and overall experience of paddling in this area are not to be missed.

Map: *Barmah State Forest Map*, Forests Commission of Victoria

Best times: August-November (The forest is usually dry in summer.)

Buffalo River

This is an alpine river offering beautiful scenery and pleasant white-water touring of an intermediate standard.

Rising on Mt Selwyn in north-east Victoria, the Buffalo River flows generally northward to join the Ovens River at Myrtleford. The river has been dammed, for irrigation purposes, near Dandongdale, forming Lake Buffalo.

About 55 kilometres of the river is canoeable, from approximately 35 kilometres upstream from the dam, to approximately 20 kilometres below the dam (its confluence with the Ovens River). This gives two good-sized tours of about one and a half days and one day.

Different sections can be picked out for short trips as there are many access points to the river, and the river seems to lend itself to the requirements of various groups. Sections can be picked which

Best
ses her favourite Victorian rivers

offer the most difficult rapids, the most varied scenery or the most suitable sites for practising skills and manoeuvres.

The water is crystal clear, with a consistent, steady flow. There are many pebble races and easy grade-two rapids. The few grade-three rapids in the upper section of the river are generally easy to spot, scout and portage if necessary. The same applies to the one grade-three rapid below Lake Buffalo (under Johnsons Bridge).

Whether all or some of the sections are paddled, the Buffalo is a fun trip. On a

its progress to the sea, a distance of about 450 kilometres, the river passes many major towns and, below Sandford, is joined by the Wannon River.

Just about all of the river can be canoeed, but it is the lower section which has most to offer. The section from Dartmoor to Nelson is an excellent camping trip, taking three or four days.

Three-quarters of the distance is through the National Park, and camping places—many of them specially designated canoe camps, with water and toilets—abound along the river at small



'Now, where did I park my boat?' (Perhaps the bureaucrats are considering the installation of parking meters on the Macalister River.) Right, at this 'point of no return' on the Mitta Mitta River a quiet paddle in Barossa Forest might seem particularly appealing!

sunny day, with the wattles in full bloom and a good water level, it can be one of those trips you never forget.

There are many good camping spots along the river. Wildlife abounds, and there are (reputedly) plenty of trout for those who like to finish off a day's paddling with a bit of fishing.

Map: 1:100,000, *Buffalo*, Natmap

Best times: August-December

Minimum level: 1.0 metres

Best level: 1.5 metres (flood height 3.0 metres)

(Gauge below dam)

Glenelg River

The lower Glenelg River is an interesting and somewhat unusual paddling venue.

The river is mostly tidal through the Lower Glenelg National Park, where a huge gorge, cliffs and abundant flora and fauna ensure plenty of diversions.

The Glenelg River rises in the Victoria Range and flows north, then west, before sweeping south to meet the coastline of Discovery Bay at Nelson, eight kilometres east of the South Australian border. During

jetties. It is essential to check with the park ranger first regarding camping during peak holiday periods.

The trip involves easy paddling. However, if you are paddling into the mouth of the river, great care should be taken as there is a strong rip and some large pot holes.

A highlight of the trip is the river gorge, 65 kilometres long and in places over 50 metres deep. It makes an impressive setting for photography. The sheer limestone cliffs and flag reeds on the banks provide an excellent habitat for wildlife.

Another feature worth further exploration is the Kentbrick Heath, an area of swampy heathland and dry ridges to the east of the river.

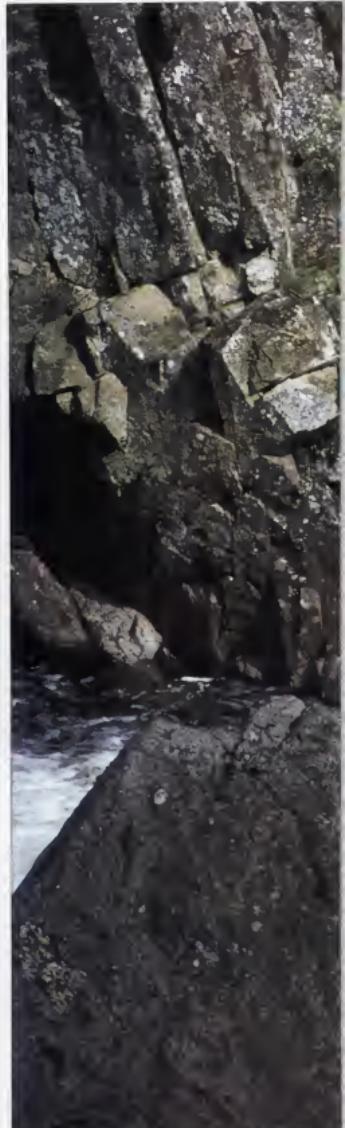
The lower Glenelg is a good canoeing/camping trip at any time of the year. Those who take time to explore the surrounding countryside will be well rewarded.

Maps: 1:100,000, *Casterston, Gambier, Nelson and Northumberland*, Natmap.

Lower Glenelg National Park National Parks Service brochure

Macalister River

An ideal week-end trip for anyone with some paddling experience, the river has



a good mix of flat sections, pebble races and easy grade-two rapids. There are some excellent camping spots in the area, and beside the river.

Rising on the south side of the Great Dividing Range near Mt Howitt, the Macalister flows south through Licola to Gummaggle Weir. It then flows through cleared farmland to join the Thomson River near Sale.



In its higher reaches, the river can be accessed by the Barkly or Wellington Rivers. The first easily accessible launching place on the Macalister itself is about 200 metres downstream from the Wellington junction.

The river is wide and meandering, suitable for just about any sort of boat. About 16 kilometres below Licola it enters a small gorge. The gorge is fairly open and

contains two grade-three rapids. They are easy to see, and portage, if necessary.

It is a very interesting trip. The lush valley is most attractive, and a feeling of well-being soon pervades paddlers in it. The finish of the trip is at Cheynes Bridge, just below the gorge.

The upper section of the river, including the access rivers, is of a slightly higher standard, and requires more water to be

canoeable.

Maps: 1:100,000, *Malfra* and *Howitt*, *Natmap*

Best times: June-December (Often only the gorge section is canoeable in summer.)

Minimum level: 0.85 metres (0.5 metres for gorge only)

Best level: 1.2 metres
(Gauge at Licola)

The International River Grading System

Yvonne McLaughlin

• CANOEISTS AND RAITERS TALK AUTHORITATIVELY about the grades of rapids. River guides and canoeing texts perpetuate the mystique. To the uninitiated, the system often appears formidable.

The International River Grading System is used to grade, on a scale of one to six, the degree of difficulty of paddling river rapids. All rivers and their individual rapids are, or can be, graded.

Rivers, and specific sections of rivers, can be easy or difficult to paddle depending on factors such as rate of descent, volume of water and the complexity of the course. The remoteness of the river, the water temperature and the consequences of a capsize can also influence the grade. A grade may vary with changes in water level.

Assessment of rapids is subjective and often controversial. A person's perception of the difficulty of a rapid depends very much on his or her level of experience and skill.

Technical evolution of boats and equipment, improved paddling techniques and changing attitudes have contributed to the lowering of the grades of some rapids. Rapids that were portaged 20 years ago are now regularly paddled. Limits are continually being challenged. The International River Grading System is static, but the rapids themselves are reassessed over time.

The grades are:

Grade 1—Easy

Flat or slow-flowing water. Open boats, with grandad in deckchair...

Grade 2—Medium

Strong current in places, with regular waves. Some manoeuvring required. Open boats are OK but leave grandad at home, and take someone who knows about paddling.

Grade 3—Difficult

Choppy water, irregular waves and cross currents. Frequent manoeuvring required. Decked boats best. Have a look from the bank before shooting these. You have to know what you are doing here, unless you like swimming.

Grade 4—Very difficult

Long and involved rapids. Usually many obstacles with big waves. Scary to look at. Only for very experienced paddlers.

Grade 5—Extremely difficult

Long, violent and turbulent rapids. Terrifying to look at. Only for very experienced paddlers, or thrill seekers intent on proving something!

Grade 6—The ultimate

Truly ferocious water. More difficult than anything you have ever seen or imagined. No margin for error. Only for those who are bored with life and ready to enter the pearly gates! •



God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to heed river grades!

Mitta Mitta River

With some of the best white water in Victoria, set amongst spectacular scenery, the upper Mitta Mitta is for experienced paddlers only.

Over the years 'the Mitta' has gained a reputation of always offering excitement, sometimes too much! It has many multi-stage rapids, chutes, abrupt drops, rocky labyrinths... and always seems to offer something new.

The Mitta Mitta initially flows off the Bogong High Plains. After its confluence with the Bundarraah River it turns northwards towards Dartmouth Dam. Below the dam it continues north to eventually flow into the Mitta Mitta arm of the Hume Weir.

The section from Glen Valley (considered to be the earliest canoeable point) to the confluence with the Bundarraah River is a good warm-up trip. It takes about three hours, and includes the Pinball, an interesting grade-three rapid.

The following section, to the Hinnomunjie Bridge, is of a higher standard and much more committing as there are few walk-out points. It usually takes five to six hours' paddling time, and a full day should be allowed. It is a demanding trip, particularly at high levels, but always memorable.

Groups should always be well equipped for this section (boat repair kit, spare paddle, and so on) and it is worth while wearing a wet suit as the water is always cold. The bigger rapids should be inspected from the bank first. Many of them offer good vantage points for photography and for experiencing thrills vicariously! (See the *Wild Shot* in *Wild no. 7*.)

With fine weather, good water and an experienced group, the Mitta is a white-water canoeist's dream.

Map: 1:250,000, *Tallangatta*, Natmap

Best times: August–November

Minimum level: 0.85 metres

Best level: 1.1 metres

(Gauge at Hinnomunjie Bridge)

Canoeing is an activity where the journey, not the destination, is the main attraction. Each river has its own special characteristics, and different rivers appeal to people for many different reasons. One friend, who has not done much paddling, says 'I love the Macalister, it's so wide and open; I feel very safe and secure'.

A number of people have remarked to me that although they feel the upper Mitta Mitta is a difficult trip, it has no hidden tricks or traps: what you see is what you get.

After paddling a few different venues you have your favourites, and it is tempting to return to them year after year. Why not try something new this year, Victoria has plenty to offer! •

Yvonne McLaughlin (see Contributors in *Wild no. 7*) is *Wild's* Contributing Editor for canoeing. She has been paddling for nine years and is an instructor with the Victorian Board of Canoe Education.



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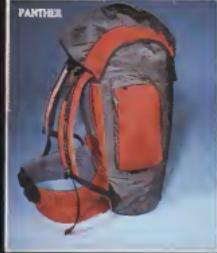


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Thomson River Canoe Trail

Yvonne McLaughlin introduces Victoria's new canoe trail

• THE THOMSON RIVER OFFERS SOMETHING for all paddlers, whether beginner or experienced, a warm-weather devotee or a hardy all-seasons paddler. Day trips and extended trips are easy to organize, and there is more to enjoy than just the paddling.

Situated in central Gippsland, a longer section of the Thomson River is now canoeable

Canoe Trail. These are Matlock (out of print), Moe, Traralgon and Maffra. An alternative map is Vicmap's 1:250,000 *Warburton* sheet. However, the map on the Canoe Trail brochure would be sufficient for most purposes.

Safety. Trail brochures are available at the start of each stage and at Cowwarr Weir. This brochure details the major rapids and features



Lunch break on the Thomson River gives plenty of time to reflect on the prospect of, left, approaching the Chute. Chris McLaughlin

due to summer irrigation water being released from the new Thomson Dam. This means that, generally speaking, at least one section of the river is canoeable at any time of the year.

The Canoe Trail, thought to be a first for Australia, was officially opened in October 1985 by the Victorian Minister for Sport and Recreation (see *Wild Information*). The trail covers a 56 kilometre section of the river, from the Thomson Dam to Cowwarr Weir, passing primarily through State Forest and close to the historic Walhalla gold-mining area. It is divided into four stages, and encompasses a variety of water conditions.

Access. The Thomson Dam is reached by the Thomson Valley Road from Erica. From the car-parking area, a short foot track leads to the river, about 500 metres below the dam wall. The trail can be accessed at the Walhalla Road bridge, Coopers Creek, and Bruntons Bridge, depending on the stage to be paddled.

Exit. The recreation park at Cowwarr Weir marks the finish of the trail. However, the access points mentioned above could also be exits depending on the stages paddled. There are four walk-out tracks in stage four which could be used in an emergency.

Maps. Four 1:100,000 Natmap sheets are needed to cover the entire Thomson River

of the river, the campsites and the walk-out tracks. Before commencing a trip, the tear-off 'trip details' section of the brochure should be filled in and left in the Intentions Box. This is particularly important for those planning to paddle stage four, which is the most difficult section and for experienced paddlers only. There have been some serious incidents in this section in recent years, necessitating searches and evacuations.

Life-jackets or buoyancy vests, and helmets, must be worn when paddling. The usual safety equipment should be carried—boat-repair kit, first-aid kit, spare paddle, rescue rope, food and spare dry clothing. If an extended trip is planned, suitable equipment and a generous supply of food should be carried in case of bad weather or emergency.

Stage One. Thomson Dam to Walhalla Road Bridge

This 16 kilometre section takes about six hours and is a good summer trip. River levels depend on dam releases, with the minimum level required being 0.63 metres at the Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works gauge situated at the dam. Some paddling experience is desirable for this grade-one to grade-two section.

The river flows through a steep valley, with mostly a light current. There are a number of pebble races, chutes and small drops. The flat sections become longer after the Aberfeldy

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River confluence. There is one 'staggered' waterfall about four kilometres downstream from the dam. This can easily be inspected and portaged on the right bank.

This section is good fun, with plenty of interesting places to stop and admire the scenery. The Alpine Walking Track runs beside the river for about five kilometres, so there is an opportunity to include some walking on your trip. The junction with the Aberfeldy River is a good place for a break, and maybe a swim. The Aberfeldy usually dry in summer, so it is a good time to try fossicking in the river bed—who knows, you might find gold!

About two kilometres below the Aberfeldy junction there is an old steel (foot) bridge over the river. It is a restored relic of the gold-mining days. A closer inspection of the bridge involves a steep climb up the bank, but it is worth it for the views up and down the river.

The Alpine Walking Track leaves the river at the Walhalla Road bridge, and there are several camping areas here.

Stage Two. Walhalla Road Bridge to Coopers Creek

This four kilometre section takes about three hours. This stage is not recommended as a separate trip because of a tedious one kilometre portage round a major hazard. A tunnel, on the left-hand side of the river, about two kilometres downstream from the bridge, takes most of the water flow, and must be portaged. The tunnel is of historical interest, and warning signs clearly indicate its presence. River conditions are very similar to those in Stage one, and again some paddling experience is desirable.

Stage Three. Coopers Creek to Bruntons Bridge

This eight kilometre section takes about four hours. The minimum river level required is 0.30 metres at the Coopers Creek gauge. (This gauge

level can be obtained by telephoning the Meteorological Bureau on (03) 669 3520.)

This section is classed as grade two, requiring some paddling experience, and is probably the most popular section of the river. The river flows through a steep valley, creating many rapids and small drops. The water tends to be warmer by this time, having travelled some distance from the dam, and pleasant swimming holes are easy to find.

Bruntons Bridge is a high foot-bridge, which again offers good views of the river valley. There is a good camping area on the right bank, about 100 metres downstream from the bridge.

Stage Four. Bruntons Bridge to Cowwarr Weir

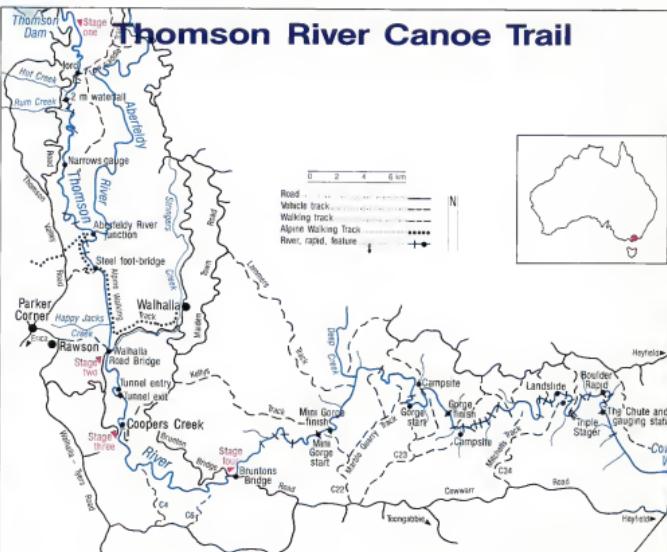
This 28 kilometre section takes between 8 and 12 hours and is recommended as a two-day trip. The minimum river level required at the Coopers Creek gauge is 0.40 metres, with a good level being 0.9 metres. Flood level is 1.6 metres. This grade-three section, rising to grade four in flood conditions, is for experienced paddlers only.

The river valley deepens in this section, creating many rapids, some of them long and involved. The current is extremely fast in places. The major rapids, and entry to the two gorges, should be inspected before proceeding.

The first mini gorge starts about four kilometres below Bruntons Bridge. Most of the rapids have still pools below them and no hidden difficulties. There is a newly cleared walk-out track, which eventually reaches Marble Quarry Track, at the end of the gorge. The major gorge is about two hours' paddling time downstream, and there is a new campsite between the two gorges.

A cleared track of about 25 metres leads to this campsite, which can accommodate five or six small tents. There is a bush fireplace (trench

Thomson River Canoe Trail





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Track Notes

and rocks) at the site. Canoes and rafts can be stored safely at the camp or tied up next to the river.

The major gorge is about two kilometres long, and the current is consistent throughout. There are few still pools and an overturned boat may be swept down the entire length of the gorge in high water. The likelihood of this happening is high, since the entry to the gorge is by a long rapid which can easily capsize any boat. The last rapid is also fairly long and difficult, but it has a large pool at the end. The gorge would be very difficult to portage.

There is a campsite and walk-out track (which eventually reaches Mitchells Track) about one kilometre below the gorge. The campsite can accommodate about three or four small tents, and has a bush fireplace. A cleared track of about 20 metres leads to the campsite, and there is room to store canoes and rafts at the camp.

The next notable feature on the river is a landslide high up on the right bank, and shortly after this is a walk-out track and the final campsite. This track is only 300 metres from the end of Mitchells Track, and 500 metres from the helipad on Mitchells Track (the operations base of a number of rescues/evacuations in recent years). This campsite has a 'five-star' rating. It is large, suitable for up to 15 small tents, has a bush fireplace, and is well positioned.

About 750 metres downstream from the campsite is a large rapid, the Triple Stager. It is a set of three drops over 100 metres, which produces conflicting currents and high pressure waves. This rapid should be inspected before shooting, and it can be portaged on the right bank.

About one kilometre downstream, the presence of large boulders in the river identifies another difficult rapid. There are several long, interesting rapids in this section, with the Chute, a narrow rapid with a tight entry and exit, being the final notable rapid.

The river widens and slows as it gets closer to Cowwarr Weir, and the last hour is flat-water paddling. The pull-out point, on the right bank, near the picnic area is obvious.

The primary aim of the Thomson River Canoe Trail is to promote the safe use of the Thomson River for canoeing, rafting and other purposes. The work that has been done in establishing the trail will benefit all river users, and does not intrude on the 'wilderness' aspect of the area. There are five signs on the length of the trail; a warning sign for the tunnel in stage two and four track signs (three of which also indicate campsites) in stage four.

The campsites were sorely needed, as many Thomson River veterans will attest, and these have been chosen with care, and have easy river access. They have been properly levelled, graded and incorporate safe fireplaces.

The brochure is extremely useful. As well as including a river map with the main features highlighted and numbered, it gives bush camp guidelines and useful information on safety and the river grading system. Copies are available from the Department of Sport and Recreation, Department of Conservation, Forests & Lands at Erica, local police stations, as well as at the trail access points. •

Yvonne McLaughlin (see Contributors In Wild no 7) is Wild's Contributing Editor for canoeing. She has been paddling for nine years and is an instructor with the Victorian Board of Canoe Education

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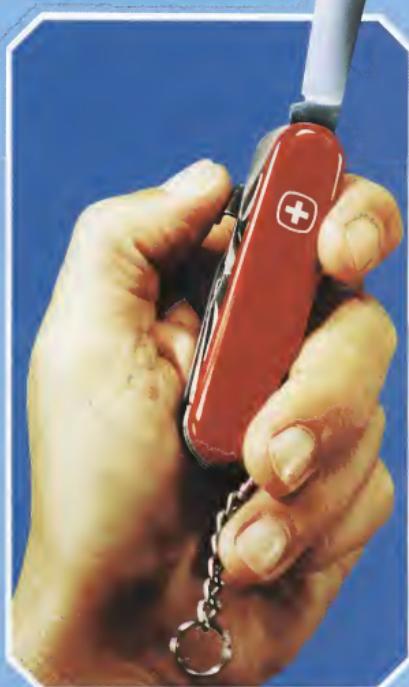
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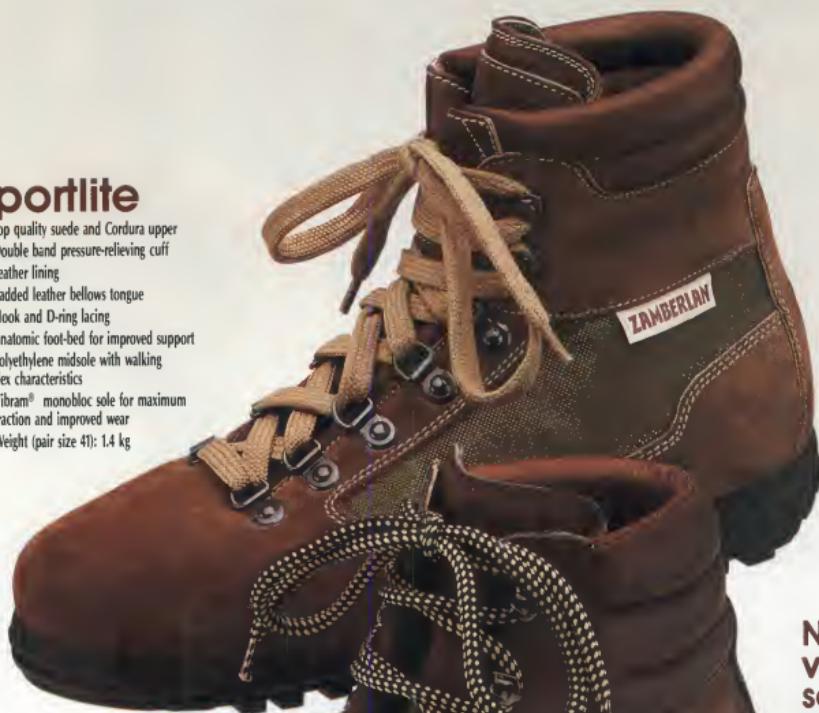


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• FROM THE SPLENDOUR OF THE WORLD'S highest peaks, rising above the lush green fields and valleys, to the harsh deserts, different world awaits your visit to the Himalayas. Dominating the skyline from Afghanistan to Assam in eastern India, these mountains initially defy belief. For thousands of years these great ranges have been the meeting point and the melting pot of countless religions and cultures and nourish some of the world's oldest traditions.

To trek in the Himalayas is the experience of a lifetime, allowing you to encounter the cultures and traditions of the people, in addition to viewing the spectacular scenery. However, a trek is not a wilderness experience, as several million people of various ethnic groups live in the villages that dot the hills. Despite the lack of roads, it is difficult to get away from people, except for short times or at high altitudes.

Most trekking is in the hill regions at elevations of between 500 and 4,000 metres, usually on well-developed trails through villages and over mountain passes. Treks usually include a series of ascents and descents during the average five or six hours of walking each day. The trek you choose can be as easy or as difficult as you like, but most trekkers choose a moderate, relaxed walk.

There are four basic ways of trekking in the Himalayas, ranging from carrying everything yourself to joining groups in which everything is organized and carried for you.

Carrying your own gear and food is not advised, as it is very strenuous and breaks an important unwritten rule in that the trekker makes no contribution to the economy because he does not employ anyone or buy food. Further, there is little interaction with local people because of the time consumed by necessary camp chores.

Hiring porters and living off the land can be quite economical if you are prepared to eat local food—rice, lentils and potatoes. With no fixed



High camp below an unnamed peak near Baruntse. Tim Macartney-Snape

itinerary to follow, this method is attractive to some people, but you will find that only the more popular routes are suitable, where food and lodgings are available.

Alternatively you could select a trekking company in the country you plan to visit, which offers the advantage of tailoring the trek to suit you (or your group). If, however, you are allocated an unsatisfactory Sirdar you could have problems along the trail. As there are

about 70 trekking companies in Kathmandu alone, it may be difficult to choose a reliable one.

Many Australians trek with an Australian Himalayan trekking company. The organization is easy: read the brochures, select an appealing trek and convenient date with a reliable company, pay your deposit, and then let that company arrange all details. You will, of course, need a valid passport, but if you pay the necessary fees the company will arrange visas and trekking permits.

Wild Activities Survey Himalayan Trekking

Trek	Trek standard	Maximum altitude (metres)	Starting dates	Duration (days)	Trekking (days)	Maximum leader: number of clients ratio	Trekking equipment, accommodation, meals, transport provided	Price
ADVENTURE TRAVEL 1st Floor, 117 York Street, Sydney NSW 2000, phone (02) 264 6033 (director: Chris Oehlrichs). Years of operation: 5								
Peaks and Lamas of Ladakh. Trekking and exploring in Srinagar, Ladakh and Leh, India	Moderate	5,000 m	Every Mon from Jun to Sep	21	9	1:12	Equipment, hotel, houseboat and tent accommodation, meals, scenic flight to Srinagar, transport	\$2,750 ex Syd/Mel
Annapurna Forest Trek. Views of the Annapurna massif from the south followed by a jungle safari in Royal Chitwan National Park, Nepal	Moderate	3,500 m	6 Jan, 10 Feb, 10 Mar, 24 Nov	26	12	1:12	Equipment, hotel and tent accommodation, meals, transport	\$2,590 ex Syd/Mel
Everest Trail Budget Trek. A long steady approach to Mt Everest Base Camp, Nepal	Strenuous	5,500 m	Every Mon from Oct to May	28	24	1:6	As above	\$1,050 ex Kathmandu
Manang... Behind Annapurna. A visit to the Manang valley, the Annapurna massif and shrines at Muktinath, Nepal	Moderate to strenuous	5,500 m	10 Mar, 7 Apr, 29 Sep, 27 Oct	31	24	1:6	As above	\$2,543 ex Syd

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This survey of Himalayan trekking companies offers a selection of popular treks, but does not attempt to assess their relative attributes. These companies operate many more treks than those included here, so read their brochures for a complete selection. Several companies offer personally tailored treks with no regular departures, and some claim to operate treks in areas not visited by other trekking companies.

Most companies in this survey require you to fill out several forms and to provide a certificate of good health from your doctor.



Sherpa girl. Tim Macartney-Snape

companies generally provide advice on fitness and preparation for your trek.

Treks are graded according to difficulty and altitude, but one person's day of easy walking is another's day of purgatory, so if you are in doubt about your suitability for a particular trek, make enquiries. Physical preparation is important and will enhance your experience, but a positive attitude and a spirit of adventure are essential.

In the accompanying table 'moderate' walking involves 10 to 15 kilometres a day at altitudes of up to 4,600 metres. 'Strenuous' walking is for people who have excellent health and do regular outdoor exercise, and involves 10 to 20 kilometres a day at altitudes of up to 5,500 metres. Strenuous treks require a training programme of regular strenuous exercise beforehand. (This is a general assessment of the grades, to be used as a guide only. Refer to the companies' brochures for precise definitions.)

Although trekking is a relatively safe and healthy activity, there are certain problems not generally encountered on walking trips in Australia. Altitude sickness affects most people in varying degrees above 4,000 metres. Generally, it is characterized by headaches, nausea and lethargy, with fit people being just as susceptible as less fit trekkers. If common sense is used, height gained slowly, and any person suffering symptoms descends to lower altitudes, then there is little to fear from this problem. Most visitors to the Himalayas get

minor stomach upsets due to the change of diet and lower standards of hygiene, but these are usually temporary and clear up after a few days.

The best time to visit the Himalayas is during the dry season but, to some extent, this varies from area to area. Each season has its own beauty, the summer months of June to September being the least popular, as this is the hot, rainy monsoon season in most areas, and hence few views of the peaks are seen; however, the fields and valleys are very green. After the monsoon season, rainfall is rare, and trekking is delightful from October to December, when views of the soaring mountains are often crystal clear. Views are still excellent during the cold dry months of January and February, and the spring flowers come into bloom during March and April, when views can become rather hazy. To assist in your planning, some companies offer regular film and slide evenings of previous treks.

All companies provide tent accommodation, supplemented by hotel, houseboat or tea-house accommodation in some cases. Accommodation details are specified in the accompanying table. Normally, a sleeping bag, mat and down jacket are supplied by most companies; however, some require you to provide your own or to hire them from the trekking company. Some also provide day packs. A suggested list of clothing, personal effects and medications to take should be provided. In the accompanying table 'trekking equipment, accommodation, meals and transport provided' includes two-person tents, tables and chairs, all eating utensils, all meals on the trek, group medical kit, and all transfers from airports. Also included on all treks are porters to carry your gear and group equipment, Sherpa guides and a group leader.

You are strongly recommended, or obliged, to obtain travel insurance by all companies, to cover trip cancellation or any medical, accident and baggage expenses incurred. Consider both the trekking company's cover and your own. Cancellation conditions are stipulated in some brochures, but make specific enquiries. Do not forget to enquire about cancellation of a trip by the company. If a client cancels, part or all of the deposit is usually withheld.

Prices quoted in this survey are subject to alteration without notice and land-content-only prices are available on request. With thoughtful planning and an open, enquiring mind, your trekking holiday in the Himalayas will reward you with experiences undreamed of, and may even draw you back time and again to the roof of the world. •

Further reading

Kashmir, Ladakh and Zanskar by Margaret and Rolf Schettler (Lonely Planet Publications, 1985).

Kathmandu and the Kingdom of Nepal by Prakash A. Raj (Lonely Planet Publications, 1983).

A Trekker's Guide to the Himalayas and Karakoram by Hugh Swift (Sierra Club, 1982).

Trekking in the Himalayas by Stan Armington (Lonely Planet Publications, 1985).

Trekking in Nepal by Stephen Bezruchka (The Mountaineers, 1985).

Barbara Bryan (see Contributors in *Wild* no 17) is *Wild's* Distribution Manager. She has been an active bushwalker for 17 years, and has walked in Kenya, New Zealand and the USA, as well as throughout Australia.

Trek	Trek standard	Maximum altitude (metres)	Starting dates	Duration (days)	Trekking days	Maximum number of clients	Maximum client: meals, transport provided	Trekking equipment, accommodation, meals, transport provided	Price
AUSTRALIAN HIMALAYAN EXPEDITIONS									
Langtang Valley Trek. A trek of contrasts in scenery, including a lonely monastery and sacred lakes, Nepal	Moderate to strenuous	4,600 m	6 Jan, 3 Feb, 10 Mar, 14 Apr, 12 May	21	15	15	1:15	Equipment, hotel and tent accommodation, meals, transport	\$2,158 ex Syd/Mel
Nepal Panorama. A trek in the Annapurna Range including river rafting and a jungle safari in Royal Chitwan National Park	Easy to moderate	3,500	Every Fri from 13 Dec to 16 May	22	9	15	1:15	As above	\$2,393 ex Syd/Mel
Annapurna Circuit. High passes, deep valleys, deserts, pine forests, monasteries and diverse peoples, Nepal	Moderate to strenuous	5,500	7,14 Mar, 4,18, 25 Apr	29	21	15	1:15	As above	\$2,530 ex Syd/Mel
Everest Arun Valley Trek. Mt Everest Base Camp and the remote Arun River valley, Nepal	Strenuous	5,500	13,20,27 Dec, 17,31 Jan, 7,14, 21 Mar, 11 Apr	36	26	15	1:15	As above	\$2,831 ex Syd/Mel
AUSVENTURE Suite 1 870 Military Road (PO Box 54) Mosman NSW 2088, phone (02) 960 1677 (Director: Warwick Deacock). Years of operation: 21									
Baltistan Mountain Range Trek, Pakistan. A trek to Masherbrum Base Camp to witness Pakistani village life	Moderate	3,000	1 Sep	26	10	15	1:10	Equipment, hotel, guest-house and tent accommodation, meals, transport	\$2,950 ex Syd/Mel
The Flower Trek. This trek offers the diversity of high alpine lakes, passes, glaciers, forests and wildflower meadows in Kashmir, India	Moderate	4,000	24 Jun, 22 Jul	29	20	15	1:10	Equipment, hotel, houseboat and tent accommodation, meals, transport	\$2,265 ex Syd/Mel/Bris
Ausventura's Great Panoramas, Nepal. A journey to remote areas of rarely seen views	Moderate	3,000	3 Jan, 26 Dec	29	21	15	1:10	Equipment, hotel and tent accommodation, meals, transport	\$2,990 ex Syd/Mel/Bris
Annapurna Grand Circle Trek, Nepal. A circumnavigation of the Annapurna massif, crossing a high pass	Moderate to strenuous	5,500	4 Apr, 8 Aug, 26 Sep	31	25	15	1:10	As above	\$2,890 ex Syd/Mel/Bris
ENCOUNTER OVERLAND LTD 10th Floor 66 King Street Sydney NSW 2000, phone (02) 29 1511 (Manager: Tim Brett). Years of operation: 22									
Tramping in Nepal. A mid-altitude trek in the region of Annapurna and Macchhapuchhare	Moderate	4,500 m	From late Jan to mid Apr and Oct to Dec	10	8	14	1:14	Equipment, tent accommodation, meals, transport	\$840 ex Kathmandu
MANDALA EXPEDITIONS PTY LTD 8 Queen Street Claremont WA 6010, phone (09) 384 2542 (Co-directors: Robin Kornweibel and Brian Lever). Years of operation: 4									
Kashmir to Ladakh, India. Contrasts in terrain from forested valleys to arid deserts	Moderate	4,500	May	28	21	12	1:12	Equipment, hotel and tent accommodation, meals, transport	\$2,400 (approx) ex Perth
Sikkim. A trek in this rarely visited region below Kangchenjunga, India	Moderate	4,500	Oct	28	21	12	1:12	As above	As above
Helambu to Langtang. Magnificent scenery north of Kathmandu, returning over the Kang La, Nepal	Strenuous	5,500	Nov	28	21	10	1:10	As above	As above
East of Mt Everest, Nepal.	Strenuous	5,500	Dec	28	21	10	1:10	As above	As above
PERIGRINE EXPEDITIONS 9th Floor 343 Little Collins Street Melbourne Vic 3000, phone (03) 602 3066 (Director: Bob Ashford). Years of operation: 7									
Chomolhari Base Camp, Bhutan. A trek in a little-known region on the Tibetan border	Moderate to strenuous	5,000	18 Apr, 28 Sep	22	12	15	1:4	Equipment, hotel and tent accommodation, meals, transport	\$4,311 ex Syd/Mel
Annapurna Dhaulagiri Trek, Nepal. A trek to the seldom visited holy land of Kopra	Moderate to strenuous	5,000	3 Jan, 7 Feb, 25 Apr, 28 Sep, 9 Nov, 21 Dec	24	15	15	1:4	As above	\$2,235 ex Syd/Mel
Mountains and Monasteries. Exploring Muslim Kashmir and Ladakh, in two very different walks, India	Moderate to strenuous	4,500	13,27 Jun, 1,29 Aug	24	11	15	1:4	Equipment, hotel, houseboat and tent accommodation, meals, transport	\$2,562 ex Syd/Mel
Number Lakes Trek, Nepal. A visit to monasteries, lakes and villages and including a spectacular pass crossing	Moderate to strenuous	5,000	21 Feb, 4 Apr, 19 Oct, 23 Nov, 21,27 Dec	29	20	15	1:4	Equipment, hotel and tent accommodation, meals, transport	\$2,452 ex Syd/Mel
TREKS & EXPEDITION SERVICES PVT LTD PO Box 3057 Kamal Pokhari Kathmandu Nepal, phone 41 2231 (Co-directors: Mike Cheney and Renchin Yonjan). Years of operation: 1									
Gorkha/Gurung Villages. The historic heartland of Nepal, citadel of the kings of these villages below the Annapurna and Lamjung peaks, Nepal	Moderate	4,500 m	By arrangement	12	9	15	1:15	Equipment, tea-house and tent accommodation, meals, transport	\$600 ex Kathmandu
Gangotri Trek. A trek to the remote Tamang and Gurung villages of Nepal	Moderate	4,500	As above	20	17	15	1:15	As above	\$900 ex Kathmandu
Expedition Everest. The historic, traditional trek to Mt Everest Base Camp, Nepal	Strenuous	5,500	As above	24	20	15	1:15	As above	\$1,165 ex Kathmandu
Around Annapurna. A visit to three different cultural zones of Manang (Tibetan), circumnavigating the Annapurna massif, Nepal	Moderate to strenuous	5,500	As above	24	21	15	1:15	As above	\$1,100 ex Kathmandu
WILDERNESS EXPEDITIONS 26 Sharp Street Cooma NSW 2630, phone (0648) 21 587 (Co-directors: Steve Colman and Tim Macartney-Snape). Years of operation: 9									
The Gentle Himalaya Rhododendron Trek. A relaxed introduction to India and Nepal, combining sightseeing and trekking	Easy to moderate	4,500	31 Mar	21	8	8	1:8	Equipment, hotel and tent accommodation, meals, transport	\$3,446 ex Syd/Mel
Kangchenjunga White Water. A remote trek in the shadow of the world's third-highest peak, Kangchenjunga, finishing with a rafting trip and jungle safari, Nepal	Moderate to strenuous	5,500	On application	35	28	8	1:8	As above	\$3,085 ex Syd/Mel
Trekking on the Edge. A demanding trek, with some climbing, up to high altitudes in remote regions of Nepal	Very strenuous	6,000	18 Apr	35	27	8	1:8	As above	\$2,860 ex Syd/Mel
Annapurna—Off the Beaten Track. A classic trek encompassing changes in scenery, climate, vegetation and people, Nepal	Moderate to strenuous	5,500	28 Feb	36	28	8	1:8	As above	\$3,085 ex Syd/Mel

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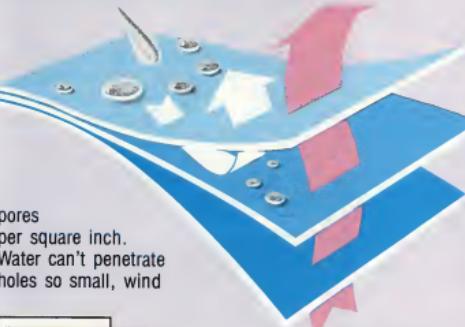
water resistance after repeated use, Gore-Tex® stays watertight and comfortable, year after year.

Demanding use in the field, including many Everest expeditions (such as

Greg Mortimer wearing a Gore-Tex® down suit on the summit of Mt Everest. Photo Tim Macartney-Snape

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Calendars!

A market approaching saturation?

Alpine Australia Calendar 1986 (Harry Nankin, RRP \$9.95). **Antarctica 1986 Calendar** (Karen Williams and Harry Keys, RRP \$NZ8.95, including postage, from PO Box 221, Wellington, New Zealand). **Contemplation 1986** (Peter Ewing, RRP \$11.50). **Victoria's National Parks Calendar 1986** (Victorian National Parks Association, RRP \$7.95). **Wilderness Australia 1986** (Robert Rankin, RRP \$7.95). **Wilderness Calendar 1986** (Peter Dombrovskis, RRP \$7.50). **1986 Wilderness New South Wales** (Kallianne Press, RRP \$7.40). **Wilderness Queensland 1986** (Robert Rankin, RRP \$7.95). **Wilderness Society Calendar 1986** (Wilderness Society, RRP \$7.95). **Wilderness Victoria 1986** (Robert Rankin, RRP \$7.95). **Wild Places of Australia 1986** (Robert Rankin, RRP \$7.95).

Alpine Australia fulfills its early promise as one of the better calendars, but its photography might generally be described as 'solid' rather than spectacular.

Antarctica is the only overseas calendar reviewed this year. It is not of the class of the others, with unspectacular photos and coarse graphics. Many of the pictures are of men or penguins.

Contemplation is still the only Australian black-and-white wilderness calendar, but Peter Ewing's photography is outstanding. Neither *Contemplation's* slightly overdone graphics nor its high price seriously detract from the appeal of this inspired production.

A smaller-format calendar, *Victoria's National Parks*, impresses for its evenness rather than its 'art', with the photos being better than the graphics.

Last year Robert Rankin published three calendars: this year he has 'upped the ante' to four! His own photos are very good, sometimes excellent, but many of the other photographers' pictures included are not up to standard. In all of his calendars the graphics are a little heavy, and Hinchinbrook Island tends to be over-represented. It is difficult to choose between Rankin's calendars. All include both outstanding pictures and a sprinkling of mediocre photos. The horizontal-format *Wild Places* includes a few particularly memorable photos, but characteristically has a couple of shockers, from Tasmania.

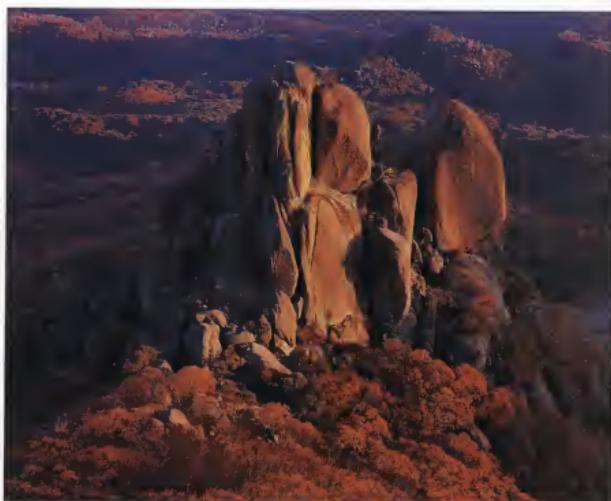
The *Wilderness Calendar* is still the standard by which the others are judged. Dombrovskis's sheer technical superiority and detailed attention to every aspect of production leave all the others, with the possible exception of *Contemplation*, in the shade. Having said that, I must say I found his two pictures of Mt Geryon not up to his usual standard.

The printing of *Wilderness New South Wales* has improved considerably and now does justice to Henry Gold's photos, even if the graphics do not. The photos are generally good but two or three really stand out.

The *Wilderness Society* has finally joined the 'calendar stakes' with its own entry. The cover gives rise to great expectation, as do the graphics. The photos are very good, there is no doubt about that, but one or two have reproduced merrily or, in the case of that of Yellow Waters Lagoon, do not display adequate sharpness. The photos by Colin Tollerell and Ern Mainka are particularly appealing.

Chris Baxter

Reviews



The Cathedral, Mt Buffalo, Victoria. Photo by Harry Nankin, reproduced from Alpine Australia Calendar 1986.

1986 Wilderness Diary by Peter Dombrovskis (Published by the author, 1985, RRP \$14.80). **Wilderness Diary 1986** (Australian Conservation Foundation, 1985, RRP \$12.95).

Peter Dombrovskis's 1986 diary surpasses even the magnificence of his 1985 publication. If anything, the photo subjects are more varied, and this year the cloth cover is more durable. Even a bookmark is provided. Admirably, the price is unchanged from last year.

Spiral-bound, the ACF's diary has an impressive colour picture for each week. This is an extremely workman-like publication, but lacking the sheer opulence of the Dombrovskis diary. A few of the photos are a little murky and/or not pin-sharp. None the less, the 1985 edition sold out, and this year's will certainly be extremely popular with wilderness lovers.

CB

Wild Australia (Reader's Digest, 1984, RRP \$39.95).

'recreational guide' to all of Australia's 540 or so National Parks (covering less than two per cent of Australia) would be a daunting task for anyone to embark on, but Reader's Digest is to be commended on the results of its efforts, *Wild Australia*.

There is a brief summary of the characteristics of each park, and details of its location, activities available and sources of information about it. Not surprisingly, this is in summary form, and only superficial.

A substantial volume, printed in colour throughout, *Wild Australia* is well designed and produced. The photography is of a very good standard, although seldom spectacular. However, considering that many of the photos were taken by one man, over a year, they are

remarkable. It is not surprising that there are too few photos of some parks, but others, like Wilsons Promontory, receive perhaps too generous an allocation. The photo purporting to be the North Wall of the Mt Buffalo Gorge is, in fact, of the Wall of China, some kilometres away.

There is a subtle but definite 'conservation message' in *Wild Australia* and a useful address list of park and conservation organizations. A valuable reference, it is a good starting point for further reading and new adventures.

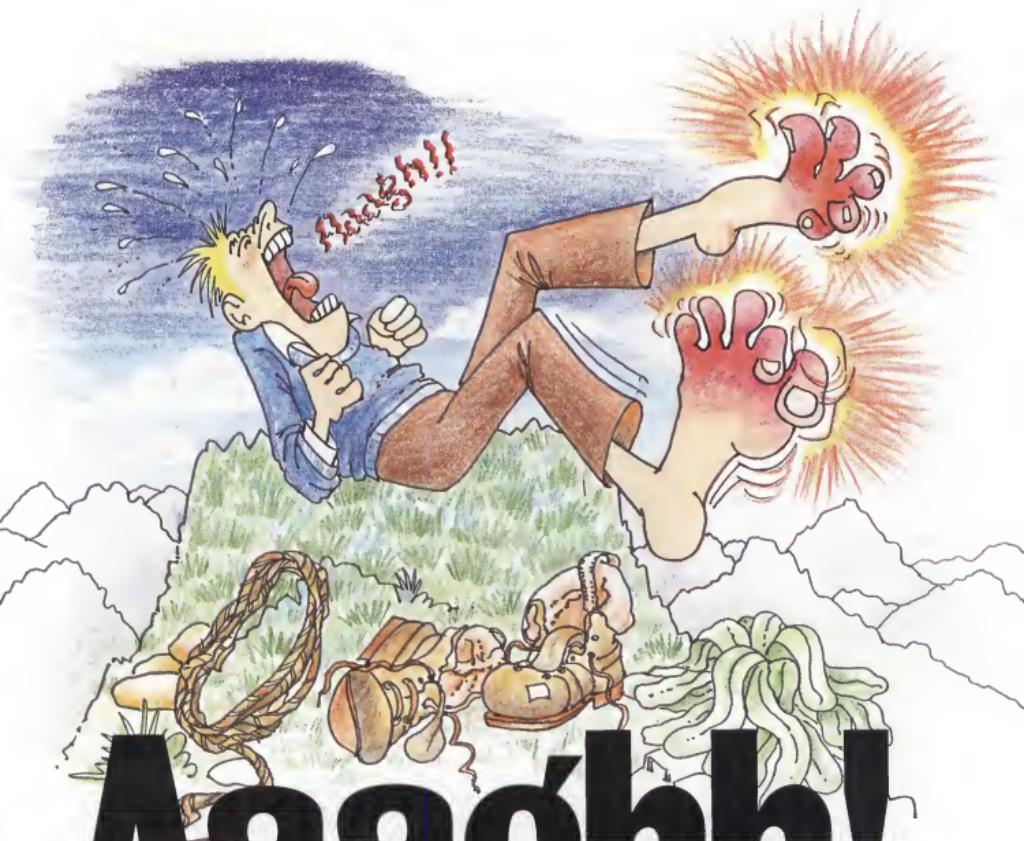
CB

Discoverers of the Snowy Mountains by Elyne Mitchell (Macmillan, 1985, RRP \$24.95).

Few people could be more qualified to write this book than Elyne Mitchell. Since her marriage to Tom Mitchell in 1935, she has lived on the upper Murray beneath the western face of the Snowy Mountains. She has been skiing and visiting the Snowies ever since.

In her own way, Elyne Mitchell has herself been a discoverer of the Snowy Mountains, having been amongst the first to ski several coveted slopes. An author and historian in her own right, her interest in the explorers of the Snowy Mountains goes back many years. She quotes correspondence with several experts, which gives an air of freshness and authority to her work. The history begins with Aboriginal visits for the Bogong moth, continues through early exploration and the controversy over whether Strzelecki climbed Mt Kosciusko or Mt Townsend (she is firmly for Kosciusko) and continues through various other explorers to the skiers of today.

Discoverers of the Snowy Mountains blends historical narrative and personal anecdote in a way which is both charming and informative. Although she is aware of the immensity of the mountains, Elyne Mitchell also has a keen eye



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Reviews

for the small flowers, mosses, wildlife and birds.

The text is supported by photographs, old and new. The historical photographs fascinated me. Grey Mare Hut is now on the edge of a line of trees. The photograph of the hut taken in 1941 shows it in the midst of an open snow plain.

Australian city dwellers are drawn to the mountains. Kosciusko National Park is now a major asset for New South Wales and receives thousands of visitors each year. Nevertheless, the problems of management remain, and in this book Elyne Mitchell expresses concern for the fragile alpine environment.

The magic of Australian mountains is captured here by one who has spent so much time amongst them. As she writes: 'Not in the south or the north, not in Europe or the Americas, Africa, New Zealand or Asia do eucalypts grow in the snow, or cockatoos foretell the blizzards with weird screams. Nowhere else have I ever felt the subtle magnetism of an ancient land that holds dreams far, far older than history.'

Brian Walters

Discovering New South Wales Rainforest

A Touring Walking and Cycling Guide edited by Jeff Angel, Angela Raymond and Rod Ritchie (Total Environment Centre and Rainforest Publishing, 1985, RRP \$10.95).

This 158-page guide provides some welcome information on many of the rainforest areas of New South Wales, from Mt Warning and the Border Ranges to the rainforest remnants of the Illawarra region.

There is not a great amount of detail, but the information given is sufficient for visitors to get a feel for these magnificent forests. With contributions from many people, the descriptions to each area differ somewhat in format, but most describe when to go, access, flora, campsites and a few walks and other suggestions. The book has black-and-white photos, line sketches and many maps.

David Noble

Park Walks Near Melbourne by Sandra Bardwell (Victorian National Parks Association, 1985, RRP \$8.95).

This is another handy set of track notes by Sandra Bardwell. This time the focus is on parks and reserves near Melbourne. All the walks described are day walks.

Some of the areas referred to in these notes have been referred to in her other books (the best known perhaps being 50 Day Walks Near Melbourne). However, some areas (such as the Cathedral Range) are not covered in her other books, and all the walks seem to be new.

There are 41 walks in all, covering 28 areas. Each walk is accompanied by notes and a map. The maps are sketch maps only, and should not be relied on too slavishly. The notes give a good idea of the points of interest and the degree of difficulty to be expected.

Park Walks Near Melbourne should give plenty of fresh ideas for day walks.

BW

Forests on Foot 40 Walks in WA by Kathy Meney and Prue Brown (Campaign to Save Native Forests (WA), 1985, RRP \$10.50).

This is an attractive guide to 40 walks in the forests of south-western Western Australia. As well as the notes, compiled with the help of many volunteers, there are supporting maps and



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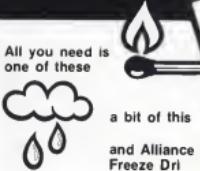


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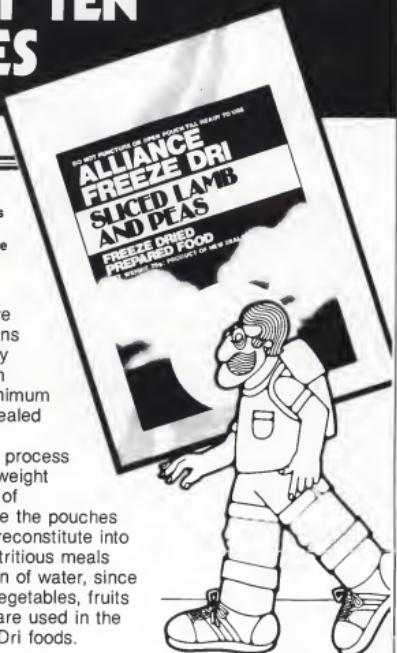
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Reviews

photographs (including good quality colour ones) and line drawings. The maps include contours and spot colour. Generally they are well laid out, but at times I had difficulty picking out the route to be travelled.

The walks range from a short half-day stroll to a seven-day expedition. There is plenty here for those planning a short family outing, as well as for those who would like to test their mettle on harder trips.

Throughout its text and presentation this book shows a deep appreciation and concern for the native forests of Western Australia; I can think of few better ways of helping to keep them than by producing a book like this.

BW

A Separate Creation by Graham Pizzey (Currey O'Neil, 1985, RRP \$29.95).

As anyone familiar with his field guide to Australian birds will know, Graham Pizzey is one of the more evocative writers on Australian wildlife, a writer whose witty phrases are both memorable and reveal hidden truths. Pizzey, then, is ideally suited to select, from the accounts of an older generation of naturalists, passages that return the reader to that dream world of pre-European Australia. In a sense, it is this world we are seeking when we go bushwalking or canoeing but now can never really find. Even those early explorers collected weeds that had reached inland Australia 20 years before them.

In this book Pizzey matches quotes from the journals of explorers and settlers with his own commentary and a photograph of each animal described. Using photographs is a more effective way of seeing through the writer's eyes than by reproducing often ill-formed, eighteenth-century illustrations. His aim is to revive an appreciation of our uniqueness so apparent to those who first wrote descriptions of this continent.

His choice of quotes is as good as his writing. How hard it is to imagine at suburban Mordialloc the vast swamp full of magpie geese that HW Wheelwright found at the time of the gold-rush. How fortunate, and sadly so far ahead of his time, was Karl Luhmholz when he accompanied the rainforest people of north Queensland into their forest in search of animals, people who were finally driven from their homes when the Tully River valley was cleared in the 1960s. There are few people today who know the bush as well as the old naturalists, or have the same skills of intimate observation. Pizzey deserves to succeed in reviving our appreciation.

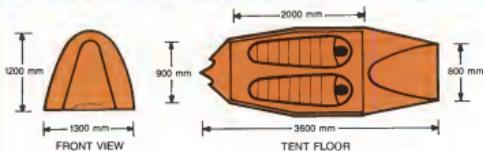
Stephen Garnett

Australian Tropical Birds by Clifford and Dawn Frith (Published by the authors, 1985, RRP \$7.95).

A few years ago the Friths produced *Australian Tropical Rainforest Life* which was an introduction to their high quality wildlife photography. In many ways their new book is a companion volume, devoted this time to the subject about which they are most knowledgeable. The similarity of format, however, shows just how much their photography has developed in the intervening period.

Part of the difference is the higher quality of the printing, the gloss and finish, and the truth of tone. The greatest difference, however, is the amount of work that has been put into new

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Rock editor, Chris Baxter, leading After the Gold-rush (19), Coles Bay, Tasmania. Photo: Glen Tempest.

photographs: a cassowary ponders five enamel-green eggs; you can almost see the notes emerging from the mouth of a tooth-billed bowerbird; and a sparrow hawk dismembers its kingfisher prey in front of you. Few have seen these birds so intimately, let alone photographed them. Such good photography is rarely available at such a reasonable price.

You can actually hear the notes produced by the tooth-billed bowerbird on a tape recording compiled specifically to accompany this book. *Some Bird Calls of Eastern Tropical Australia* can be purchased from the authors for \$10.00. Eighty-five species are included on the tape, which has been compiled by two of Australia's most accomplished recorders of bird calls, Andre Griffin and Ray Swaby.

SG

The Desert Sea by Vincent Serventy (Macmillan, 1985, RRP \$29.95).

There are many who made the pilgrimage to see Lake Eyre in flood in 1974, but few saw as much of it as Vincent Serventy. In a sense, much more so than Pizsey's book, this is a book of historical photographs, an archive of a flooding on a scale unlikely to occur again in our lifetime. It is a record that was strongly resisted by the lake itself, which sank Serventy and his cameras on several occasions as he tried to punt across or around it. The lake was big enough to raise a mean surf when the wind got up; after reading this account I am sure that next time it is crossed it will be by sailboat! Nevertheless, by supplementing these early trips with photographs from later expeditions, particularly a raft trip down the Warburton River from near Birdsville during the most recent flood, a fine portfolio has been produced.

The writing is perhaps a little bland, certainly one could describe more dramatically the prospect of a 60 kilometre swim from a sunken boat in the middle of Lake Eyre. He was certainly privileged: the lake can have threatened few with drowning. Still, Serventy knows his stuff and his accounts are based on research published not only in books but in scientific journals. A biological training is betrayed by the ordering of his observations by taxonomic group, rather than by place or time, but he has now been there so often that it would have been difficult to do it any other way. Certainly this is a book I shall be taking to Lake Eyre when next it floods. SG

Donald Thomson's Mammals and Fishes of Northern Australia edited and annotated by Joan Dixon and Linda Huxley (Nelson, 1985, RRP \$35).

Take yourself back to the 1930s and imagine the difficulties of crossing Cape York Peninsula with a team of packhorses, camping amidst the salt flats and malarial mosquitoes of its west coast while trying to understand the language and customs of the three or four tribes of Aborigines who live there. Then imagine, on top of that, recording the expedition with ancient plate cameras, developing the negatives on to glass in a dark-room made of bark, collecting and preparing for museums nearly every creature you encounter, and entering accurate scientific details in your notebook. It sounds excessive, but this was the programme Donald Thomson followed, not only on Cape York but in Arnhem Land as well. So successfully did he

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carry out that programme that his results are still of value 50 years later, 15 years after his death.

Although it is a trifle odd to publish the synopsis of a museum collection as an up-market book, there are two reasons why it has worked. The first is that the quality of Thomson's photography is exceptional—splendid studies of people and landscapes now gone. Even the animals can stand comparison with the profusion of today's colour portraits. Secondly, Thomson has the engaging style of that class of naturalists who wrote field notes for a wider audience than themselves. Dixon and Huxley have let his writing stand on its own, pointing out, only parenthetically, data that contributes new knowledge to modern science. Thomson was a remarkable man, it is good to see his effort being recognized.

SG

A Singular Woman A film by Gillian Coote, 1985 (48 minutes, 16 millimetres or video, available for hire, for \$50, from the Sydney Filmmakers Co-operative Ltd, PO Box 229, Pyrmont, NSW 2009; telephone (02) 660 8999).

This documentary film is about Marie Byles (see *Wild Information* in *Wild* no 18), the first woman to practise law in New South Wales, a conservationist directly responsible for establishing Bouddi National Park on the central coast of New South Wales, leader of a mountaineering expedition to western China in 1938 to climb the virgin Mt Sanseto, traveller and author.

Hers was a lonely and demanding pilgrimage. She demanded much from herself and from those she knew. While watching *A Singular Woman* one feels as close to Marie Byles as, perhaps, anyone ever did. Her friends, including Paddy Pallin, reminisce with humour, candour and affection.

The latent admiration and envy we all harbour for the wilful and self-sufficient individual is aroused by this film. Marie Byles's exacting determination, integrity and spirituality are an inspiration for men and women. Fortunately her example is not unnecessarily politicized until the film's conclusion.

Michael Collie

New Zealand Triathlon Training Book by Arthur Klap and Derek Paterson (Sporting Endeavors, 1985, RRP \$NZ15, plus \$NZ1.00 postage, from PO Box 10-429, The Terrace, Wellington, New Zealand).

The triathlon has shown a rapid increase in popularity over the last few years. Although there is literature on the individual sports that comprise a triathlon, there is still little available on how to train in order to combine these sports in a triathlon event. Klap and Paterson have faced this challenge in their *New Zealand Triathlon Training Book*.

There seems to be confusion over what events make a triathlon. A combination of any three events is the definition suggested by the authors. Many people expect a triathlon to involve swimming, cycling and running. Those interested in this 'standard' style of triathlon may be put off by the canoe on the front cover and feel that this book is not for them. It would be unfortunate if this was the case. Klap is a leading triathlete in the 'standard' type of triathlon and there are excellent chapters on 'Developing your own training programme',

'Mastering techniques' and 'Eating and drinking for performance'. These are thorough, up-to-date chapters which are easy to understand.

Despite being obvious fitness fanatics, the authors are keen on large-scale recreational participation in triathlons, and are concerned that the image of triathlons as gruelling events will deter potential participants. Hence the chapter, 'Developing your own training programme', is particularly good, as it provides both the recreational and dedicated triathlete with a framework for setting up an individual programme.

The chapter on 'Equipment for multisports events' discusses the important features to consider when buying gear for triathlons. As with the rest of the book, the informal chatty style makes for easy reading. There is an amusing story of how Klap's lycra triathlon suit disintegrated during his standard 96 training laps in a heavily chlorinated public pool.

This book is particularly strong in its information on triathlons involving canoeing: such literature is very hard to come by. The last two chapters on leading New Zealand triathlons and triathlon personalities will create only moderate interest outside New Zealand, although Erin Baker now features among the top international women triathletes.

Hopefully this book will stimulate the publication of a similar book, with complementary chapters on Australian triathlons and triathlon personalities, on the other side of the Tasman.

Roy Smith

The Survival Handbook by Anthony Greenbank (Bell & Hyman, 1985, RRP \$12.95).

Here is yet another survival handbook. There must be quite a good market for this kind of book, because there seems to be no shortage of new books dealing with the subject. I know I have had a stream of them to review.

I found it quite interesting to read what I should do if attacked by a wolf, or even, for that matter, by a tiger. If confronted by an erupting volcano I shall certainly take the advice given by this book and leave the area. *The Survival Handbook* has been revised for Australian conditions. However, my own experience in this country had not led me to realize that bears are a hazard all over [the] world' (page 54).

Still, the book does contain a good design for a paper dart (use it for SOS messages when trapped in tall city buildings) so I expect I will be able to put it to some use.

BW

Blue Mountains National Park: Bridal Veil Falls poster by Rowan Fotheringham, **Kosciusko National Park: Alpine Ash** poster by Klaus Hueneke (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, 1985, RRP \$3.00 each, plus \$1.50 each for postage, from 189 Kent Street, Sydney, NSW 2000).

These two good-quality 865 x 755 millimetre colour posters feature appealing scenes from two well-known National Parks.

Barbara Bryan

Publications for possible review are welcome. Send them to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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Extract from the Industrial Design Council of Australia product assessment of the J&H Winter-lite

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Down Sleeping Bags

Have a really good night's sleep, with Stephen Brew and Graham Hambleton

Wild Gear Survey

• SLEEPING BAGS WITH HIGH QUALITY DOWN fill, partitioned construction and a hood are examined in this survey. In some cases the bags surveyed are only a sample of a manufacturer's range.

While synthetic sleeping bag insulation is cheaper, and superior in very wet conditions, down sleeping bags are more versatile, lightweight and compact.

Those purchasing a sleeping bag ten years ago may remember the narrow choice and limited information available. Terms like 'featherdown', 'superdown', 'box walled', 'choice of any colour as long as it's green', and adjectival, qualitative description ('How warm is this bag?' 'Very!') were the norm. Today, the problem is one of excessive information and choice. After parting with your hard-earned dollars you really do need a 'good lie down'.

Our sleeping bag is our final refuge in severe weather. It insulates us from the outside world. The colder the environment the more we must be insulated to maintain a constant body temperature. We stay warm inside our sleeping bag because, by resisting the transmission of heat, it reduces the amount of heat we lose to a colder environment.

Air does not readily conduct heat. Surrounded by an even and continuous layer of still air trapped in a maze of hairy down filaments, we lose very little body heat. Prevented from circulating, still air adjacent to our skin needs to be heated only once. It is not uncommon for a walker to sleep contentedly under the stars as frost forms on the outside of his sleeping bag. So little heat passes through the bag that, although body temperature is maintained inside, the temperature of the outer shell falls well below freezing point.

For its weight, uncompressed down occupies a massive volume and has a huge surface area. Down is readily compressed, resilient and fluid—that is, it fills irregular and changing spaces, conforming to body contours.

Use. First, consider how and where your new bag will be used. Consider the 'average' conditions in which the bag will be used, and the extremes. Second, decide how sensitive to cold you are. If you use an electric blanket all winter consider yourself a sensitive sleeper and concentrate on the warmer bags. Someone with a greater tolerance may find a three-season bag satisfactory in the depths of winter. The bag you choose to take to genuine alpine environments, overseas, will probably be inappropriate for any other application. (Consider the possibility of, one day, owning more than one bag.) Mid-winter temperatures in the Australian Alps very rarely drop below -10°C to -15°C . Numerous variables prevent useful calibration of sleeping bag performance. The temperature ratings given by manufacturers are understandably subjective and, at best, only a guide to the intended application of bags. They cannot be used to accurately compare the bags of different manufacturers. Temperature ratings seem extremely optimistic at times—a case of 'tell 'em what they want to hear'.

It is sensible to consider the performance of sleeping bags in more general terms. As a guide, a four-season sleeping bag, that is a bag



An early-morning call from Jack Frost. Michael Collie

suitable for winter use, should have about 700-900 grams of good down fill. A bag for prolonged snow camping and mountaineering should have about 900-1100 grams of down. A three-season bag need only have 500-700 grams.

Shape. If you want to use your sleeping bag as a quilt, a rectangular bag with a zip along one side and the foot is required. The less air you have to keep warm inside the bag the better. Bags that have the least internal room and most closely follow the body's form are warmest. Bags are available in an array of tapers and body-hugging 'mummy' designs. If you suffer from claustrophobia, are a restless sleeper, or like to sleep spread-eagled, a snug bag may not be an ideal choice. Most shops will allow you to lie in a bag (with shoes removed, of course) see if it is sufficiently long and wide.

Because feet are particularly sensitive to the cold, being at the body's extremity, better bags, and all the mummy-style bags surveyed, incorporate a foot box which prevents the feet from creating pressure points (cold spots).

Construction. Down is contained in compartments or tunnels which prevent its movement away from pressure points,

maintaining an even layer of down and still air around the body. (The bulging inner and outer shells of a quilted, or sewn-through, bag meet at the lines of stitching, where heat can readily escape. Sewn-through bags are not included in this survey.)

Box-like chambers are formed by bulkheads, or walls, linking the inner and outer shells, which remain separated and parallel, creating a constant, even cross-section. Perpendicular walls form rectangular compartments. Slanting walls form overlapping compartments with parallelogram cross-sections. Slanting baffles maintain the best possible distribution of down which has failed to fully loft to fill the compartments (because of dampness or contamination).

Tunnel-like, down-filled compartments usually traverse the bag from side to side, but down can move away from pressure points (for instance from above the occupant to his sides), creating unwanted cold spots. Good bags have side baffles which prevent down moving from a compartment above the occupant to the corresponding compartment below. Longitudinal compartments, used by J&H, run from the neck to hips, eliminating the flow of down from above the occupant to either side of his torso.

Fabrics. Down bags were initially made of cotton. Because of their light weight and durability, synthetic fabrics became more common despite their unappealing texture. New high-thread-count nylon fabrics can claim cotton-if not silk-like feel. Cottons are heavy and deteriorate in time but, if preferred, a cotton inner sheet is the best option.

The most common outer-shell fabric is 1.9 ounce-per-square-yard nylon. However, lighter, high-thread-count fabrics are becoming more popular. (Since this table was compiled fewer bags are available in heavy fabrics.) Tighter weaves are less likely to leak and are more draught-resistant. Down loft is less inhibited by a lighter fabric. Shells made from lightweight fabrics are very light and supple, but less resistant to abrasion. A limited amount of down leakage is to be expected from any bag and is normal. Most leakage problems can be traced to material faults. Reputable manufacturers will replace seriously leaking bags.

Down quality. The purer down is, the greater its insulation properties. Terms such as 'superdown' and 'featherdown' have no useful meaning, and more technical terms are of little more than academic value because of the discrepancy between claimed and actual specifications. Down sleeping bags are subject to the Australian Standards Associations Standard 2479-1981. No bag surveyed satisfies the standard's labelling guidelines requiring permanent labelling specifying the Australian manufacturer's or distributor's name, the country of origin, the percentage (by weight) of the down and feather components of the fill, and type of materials the bag is made from.

Because, in commercial practice, it is not possible to completely separate down from feathers, the Australian standard allows for variation. It allows fill classified as '95% down, 5% (small) feather' to consist of as little as 88.35% down, and fill classified as '80%/20%' to include as little as only 74.4% down.

Alternatively, fill quality is classified by its loft—that is, the volume occupied by a given weight of uncompressed fill. Loft is measured by placing an ounce of fill in a cylinder. A lightly weighted piston is allowed to sink until it comes to rest on the lofted fill. An ounce of '550 loft down', for example, expands to fill 550 cubic inches. Most of the bags surveyed are claimed to contain fill consisting, in part or whole, of down of this quality. A given weight of '550 loft down' should insulate better than the same weight of '400 loft down', as the insulating layer will be thicker and the fill surface area greater.

Down standards are not well policed and quality is difficult to regulate. Fill quality varies

between manufacturers, and substantially between batches. A good indication of fill quality can be gained by feeling its texture through the sleeping bag fabric. The fewer quills you feel, the higher the down content. All the sleeping bags surveyed contained fill of adequate quality.

Loft. All other things being equal, the thicker the bag the warmer it will be. However, two bags of identical loft and fill quality may perform differently. Of two bags of identical thickness and fill quality, the one with more fill, that is, more densely filled, will be warmer. The optimum fill density is greater than that required to simply 'inflate' a sleeping bag shell to its maximum loft. The greater fill density of an 'over-filled' bag means that less fill will shift from pressure points, and that optimum loft will be maintained longer in damp environments and throughout the life of the bag. Greater fill density also further restricts air circulation, providing greater insulation from a given thickness or loft. Better bags have about 30% more fill than is simply required to fill the shell volume. Loft should not be considered independently of fill quality and quantity.

We measured the loft of each sleeping bag 23 centimetres from its neckline after it had been agitated and laid out for two weeks. We also measured the re-loft two hours after a 24-hour period of compression. In two hours, to our surprise, most of the more inexpensive bags exceeded their loft as measured after two weeks of loose storage, whereas the high-down-content, high-loft bags only attained their initial loft. Bags with a greater proportion of feathers loft well initially, then subside; the better bags maintain their loft.

Draught tube. A generously-filled draught tube prevents heat loss through the zip. A single draught tube or a pair, one each side of the zip, should create an effective seal. Better draught tubes are plump and stand erect and firm (rather than hinge) against the zip.

Hood. Draw-string hoods are standard, but some are contoured, providing superior closure round the head.

Draught collar. A draught collar, slightly above the shoulders of the user, is standard on some bags and an option on others. It is a very effective method of preventing the loss of warm air as you toss and turn in your bag. The draught collars we liked best had a draw-string, and were well filled with down.

Options. Gore-Tex shells are available, for part or all of the bag. This is of specific interest to those interested in prolonged snow camping.

Only a few manufacturers offer a variety of sizes. The average person is well catered for, but the tall and short are not. Usually only a larger size is offered as an option, leaving the more *petit* 'swimming' in a standard bag and

doomed to carrying the excess bag weight forever. Unfortunately, a good quality children's bag is unavailable.

Zip. Most sleeping bags surveyed have a double-ended zip so that the bag can be opened from both ends for ventilation and, in many cases, to join a pair of matching bags.

Most sleeping bags use a number-five size coil-type zip. The two most common brands are Opti and YKK—the latter appears to be the better brand. Some manufacturers use whichever is available, and some use a heavier and stronger number-eight zip.

Locking sliders, a feature of recently introduced zips, stay where they are positioned. Their detractors add that they sometimes never move! A non-locking zip glides more easily and requires only a Velcro tab to prevent unintentional opening, but cannot be relied on to stay in one place when partially opened.

It is important that some form of anti-snagging measure be taken to prevent the zip snagging or clogging. A piece of tape sewn on to the draught tube down the length of the zip seems to be the best solution.

Stuff sacks. Although a small part of your decision in selecting a down sleeping bag, a good stuff sack enhances the ease of use and protection of the bag. Some manufacturers provide excellent ones, while others are a waste of material.

A good stuff sack should have a draw-cord with a plastic toggle that works, be waterproof, have a hand-loop at one end to ease unpacking, and be large enough to accommodate the bag (without requiring Herculean strength to compress it) and yet not be so large as to waste valuable rucksack space.

Care and use. Ill-treated sleeping bags do not perform well. Their owners leave them stored inside their stuff sacks while not in use, they do not use a (cotton or silk) removable bag liner, and never think to wash them; after a couple of years they say, 'It doesn't work like it used to'.

A down sleeping bag is an expensive piece of equipment and should be treated with care. It must be stored hung or laid, uncompressed, in a dry place. A sleeping bag liner will reduce the contamination of down by body oils and perspiration, and the need for frequent washing. A down bag usually needs washing every two or three years, depending on the frequency of use. (See *Wild* no 4.)

An insulating mattress is an important accessory, particularly in winter. Those who intend to sleep on snow should be aware that more insulation is required than when bushwalking.

With thoughtful storage, care and use, a quality down bag should last many years. •

Wild Gear Survey Down Sleeping Bags

	Suggested use	Shape	Construction	Total weight (kilograms)	Manufacturer's claimed fill weight (grams)	Stable loft measured 23 centimetres from neckline (centimetres)	Fabric	Draught tube	Zip	Zip closure	Stuff sack size (litres)	Features	Options	Overall rating	RR price
Aurora Australia															
Snowson	4 season	Rectangular	Perpendicular walls	1.95 kg	860 gm	38 cm	1.9 oz nylon/cotton	•	YKK 5 locking	•	13.7 l		•	•	\$203
10 Below 254	Snow	As above	As above	2.28	1,100	63	As above	•	As above	•	19.0			•	\$245
Blue Ridge China															
Alpine 700	4 season	Contoured rectangular	Oblique walls	1.68	700	38	1.9 oz nylon	••	YKK 8 locking	••	11.3	Downdraft with draw-cord, box foot	Left or right zip	•••½	\$249

	Suggested use	Shape	Construction	Total weight (kilograms)	Manufacturer's claimed fit weight (grams)	Stable loft measured at 23 centimetres from neck line (centimetres)	Fabric	Draft tube	Zip	Zip closure	Stuff sack size (litres)	Features	Options	Overall rating	RR price
Downie Australia															
Timeline 820	4 season	Contoured rectangular	Perpendicular walls	1.71	620	40	1.9 oz nylon	●	YKK 5 locking	●	8.6	Storage sack	Left or right zip	● ●	\$240
Timeline 600	As above	Mummy	As above	1.45	600	52	As above	●	As above	●	8.8	As above	As above	● ●	\$220
Snowfield 900	Snow	As above	As above	1.99	900	68	As above	●	As above	●	12.2	As above	As above	● ●	\$280
Glacier 1100	Expedition	As above	Oblique walls	2.24	1,100	118	As above	● ● ●	As above	●	14.5	Down collar, cold-weather hood, storage sack	As above	● ● ●	\$374
Fairytown New Zealand															
Patrider	4 season	Rectangular	Oblique walls	1.67	750	83	1.9 oz nylon/cotton	● ● ●	YKK 5 locking	● ● ● ●	12.8	Zip tape	Left or right zip	● ● ● ½	\$307
Snowline	3 season	Mummy	As above	1.45	600	54	As above	● ● ●	As above	● ● ● ●	11.8	As above	As above	● ● ● ½	\$266
Alpine	Snow	As above	As above	1.59	800	71	1.9 oz nylon	● ● ●	As above	● ● ● ●	11.4	As above	As above	● ● ● ½	\$299
Summit	Expedition	As above	As above	1.67	1,100	98	As above	● ● ● ●	As above	● ● ● ●	18.2	As above	As above	● ● ● ½	\$360
J&W Australia															
Chap Hotel	3 season	Rectangular	Perpendicular walls	1.15	500	47	1.5 oz nylon	● ● ●	YKK 8	● ● ● ●	7.0	Zip tape	Left or right zip, extra length	● ● ● ●	\$225
Bushlife Super	4 season	Tapered rectangular	As above	1.51	850	86	As above	● ● ● ●	As above	● ● ● ●	12.5	As above	As above	● ● ● ●	\$315
Dandelion	As above	Mummy	Perpendicular walls (some longitudinal)	1.43	700	81	As above	● ● ● ●	As above	● ● ● ●	8.6	As above	As above, Gore-Tex shell	● ● ● ●	\$319
Wintertite	Snow	As above	Oblique walls (some longitudinal)	1.59	900	135	As above	● ● ● ●	As above	● ● ● ●	11.9	As above	As above	● ● ● ●	\$394
Most Australia															
Apelles	3 season	Contoured rectangular	Perpendicular walls	1.36	550	42	1.9 oz nylon	● ● ● ●	YKK 5 locking	● ● ● ●	6.9	Down collar with draw-cord, zip tape	Left or right zip, cotton lining, extra length	● ● ● ●	\$246
Odile	4 season	As above	As above	1.64	700	52	As above	● ● ● ●	YKK 8	● ● ●	9.3	As above	As above	● ● ● ●	\$274
Spindrift	As above	Mummy	As above	1.60	700	42	As above	● ● ● ●	As above	● ● ●	9.3	As above	Left or right zip, cotton lining, extra length, Gore-Tex foot	● ● ●	\$308
Main Range	Snow	As above	As above	1.81	900	90	As above	● ● ● ●	As above	● ● ●	14.1	As above	As above	● ● ● ●	\$380
Mountain Designs Australia															
Traveller Super	3 season	Tapered rectangular	Perpendicular walls	1.23	450	60	1.5 oz nylon	● ●	YKK 8	● ● ● ●	8.9	Zip tape	Left or right zip, extra length	● ● ● ●	\$249
Serac	As above	Rectangular	As above	1.47	700	45	As above	● ●	As above	● ● ● ●	9.2	Extra large	As above	● ●	\$269
Standart	4 season	Mummy	As above	1.55	650	68	As above	● ● ● ●	As above	● ● ● ●	10.5	Zip tape	Left or right zip, extra length, Gore-Tex foot, Gore-Tex shell	● ● ● ●	\$298
Brida	Snow	As above	As above	1.76	900	98	As above	● ● ● ●	As above	● ● ● ●	12.8	Open collar, double draft-tape, zip tape	As above	● ● ● ½	\$399
Paddy Pallin Australia															
Kandria	3 season	Tapered rectangular	Perpendicular walls	1.34	530	79	1.9 oz nylon	●	Opti 5 locking	● ● ● ½	6.3	Zip tape	Left or right zip, extra length, extra width	● ● ●	\$235
Hotham	4 season	As above	As above	1.91	745	63	1.9 oz nylon/cotton	● ● ●	As above	● ● ● ½	10.7	As above	As above	● ● ●	\$288
Hotham Tops	4 season+	As above	As above	1.93	860	62	1.9 oz nylon	● ● ●	As above	● ● ● ½	11.0	As above	As above	● ● ●	\$299
Snowgum	Snow	Mummy	As above	1.60	800	84	As above	● ● ● ●	As above	● ● ● ½	8.4	As above	As above	● ● ●	\$340
Paradown Australia															
Polar 254	4 season	Rectangular	Perpendicular walls	1.80	700	Not available	1.9 oz nylon/cotton	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	\$247
Arcic	Snow	As above	As above	2.19	900	Not available	As above	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	\$274
Salomon China															
Akkima	4 season	Mummy	Oblique walls	1.78	700	49	1.9 oz nylon/cotton	● ● ●	YKK 8	● ●	12.8	Foot zip, valuables pocket	● ● ●	\$229	
Akkima Plus	Snow	As above	As above	2.03	800	66	As above	● ● ●	As above	● ●	15.2	As above	● ● ●	\$249	
Sleepmaster China															
Franklin	Snow	Mummy	Perpendicular walls	2.56	1,300	115	1.9 oz nylon	●	YKK 5	●	21.3	Down collar with draw-cord	●	\$380	
Terra Australia															
Neve 9 XL	4 season+	Rectangular	Perpendicular walls	2.35	900	111	1.9 oz nylon	●	YKK 8	● ● ●	14.8	Zip tape, valuables pocket	Extra length, note width different to different shell	● ● ●	\$290
Peda 8	Snow	Mummy	As above	1.89	800	100	As above	●	As above	● ● ●	13.5	As above	As above	● ● ●	\$295

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Rucksacks

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Equipment

• **Torso Talk.** Have you ever considered why torso-length adjustment has so rapidly become an almost universal feature of modern rucksacks? The distance between contemporary rucksack shoulder straps and hip-belt is usually adjusted by raising or lowering the shoulder-strap attachment points, an approach pioneered by Lowe Alpine Systems. While torso-length adjustment can be useful, the advantage to retailers or stocking one-size-fits-all packs, instead of a size range of each model, is the real reason why this feature has been so rapidly and universally adopted by a notoriously conservative market.

Good torso-length adjustment allows one pack to be used by two or more people of different shapes. It also allows precise hip loading, and the accommodation of diverse loads. Assurance of comfort is considered by many to justify the additional weight and complexity. If, however, a fixed-back-length pack fits you comfortably, you can enjoy the benefits of a lighter and simpler pack. After all, when was the last time you bought a pair of adjustable shoes?

The new Macpac range marries North American profile and style with Kiwi longevity, and deserves the attention of anyone considering buying a pack, with or without torso-length adjustment. Macpac should be applauded for persevering with canvas as a pack cloth. While Macpac packs are available in Cordura, walkers who recognize the durability and waterproofness of canvas packs will appreciate the alternative. The new Macpac Torre Mk V features a parallel pair of padded shoulder straps that slide up and down grooved aluminium staves, following the contour of the back and shoulders. The shoulder straps continue down each side of the spine and move independently. Careful packing will be necessary to prevent uncompromising items prodding your otherwise unprotected spine.

Torso-length adjustment by the user is easily and quickly achieved even while carrying the pack fully laden. Similar to the sliding Karrimor SA shoulder harness, the Macpac approach compares favourably with the alternatives available. The pivoting, contoured 'Liberty' hip-belt continues to evolve. Refinements include a padded hip-belt, abbreviated to avoid inhibiting leg movement. The shoulder harness and hip-belt meet behind a porous lumbar pad which is essential for comfortably maintaining a good posture while burdened. Shock-cord loops, designed for carrying crampons, perfectly accommodate a rolled sleeping mat. Like all packs of this type, the 80 litre Torre is heavy at 2.4 kilograms.

From Karrimor, the people who first brought us 'day-glow' packs, come more eye-catching models such as the Jaguar E and Hot Series models in jet black fabric and webbing with contrasting hot yellow buckles and embroidered logo!

Karrimor has also introduced the Panther packs. Panthers are available in three fixed

back-lengths; 55, 65 and 70 litre capacities; and cost from about \$145 to \$167. The Panthers' removable 'format' backbone, two parallel, malleable aluminium bars set in a firm foam mat, is common to the Karrimor Alpiniste, Hot Series, New Lynx and Papoose 1. The Panthers have top tension-straps for minor shoulder-strap



Macpac's new Torre (left) and Ascent rucksacks.

adjustment, numerous pockets and a mesh pouch. The Panther series complements the Karrimor Jaguar S (which has a lifetime guarantee and is priced from \$230) and Jaguar E (five-year guarantee, from \$185) ranges, which feature torso-length adjustment.

Since being acquired by the Great Outdoors Company last February, Hallmark has introduced its new *Tergonomic* range of rucksacks. The Tergonomic harness features torso-length and torso-breadth adjustment. RRP \$190 to \$204.

As reported in *Wild* no 18, Flinders Rangers Camping now offers *internal-frame* rucksacks in two models. Available in three sizes, Globetrotter has a zip-off day pack. The Explorer comes in two sizes. Prices range from \$131 to \$166. For the die-hards, Flinders Rangers *external-frame* rucksacks are still available, in five models priced from \$83 to \$157.

• **As Easy As Alpha, Beta, Gamma.** The two new three-season Macpac Delta tents are expected to complement the classic all-season Olympus. Two alloy wands each span between diagonally opposing corners of the rectangular floor tub and intersect each other at two separate points. The cross-section created at the mid-point resembles a steep A without the peak. The Delta I and II vary significantly only

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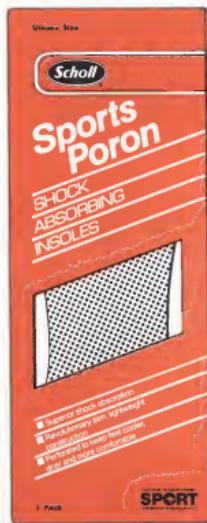
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Equipment

in size. Both have vestibules and were designed with the aid of a wind tunnel to withstand high winds to a degree unexpected, considering their



Macpac Delta I (left) and Delta II tents. (Not to be confused with the gazebo!)

weight. The two-person Delta I weighs 2.7 kilograms and costs about \$360. The three-to-four-person Delta II has an entrance at both ends, weighs 3.5 kilograms and costs about \$430.

• **Light Footed.** A bushwalker's feet often feel like lead weights at the end of a day's walking. The new *Leatherlight* boots by *Meindl*, weighing only 1.4 kilograms for a pair of size 43s, have been designed by the importer, *Wild Country*, to fit broad Australian feet, a feature which could be good news for the foot-weary. With hooks, eyelets and bellied tongues, these boots incorporate new Vibram soles which are claimed to be hard-wearing, shock-absorbing, and re-soleable. The *Leatherlight* has seamless leather uppers, leather mid-soles, full leather lining, moulded foot beds, and will sell for approximately \$168 a pair.

• **Reappearance.** The onerous task of pitching a tent in the rain is no fun when you get soaked as a result. The two skins of the new *Hallmark Chrysalis* (not to be confused with its predecessor which was reviewed in *Wild* no 9) can be pitched together ensuring that the interior will stay dry during pitching. The connected breathable inner tent and proofed ripstop nylon outer skin reduces condensation, as well as resulting in a strong, rigid tent. Three aluminium alloy hoops support the tent which weighs 2.7 kilograms, accommodating two people and gear. RRP \$307.

• **Under the Bag.** Further to our report in *Wild* no 15, more additions to the *lightweight self-inflating foam mattress* market are the *Fairydown Porta-Pad* and *Basic Designs' Equalizer*. The shoulder-to-hip Porta-Pad Lightweight measures 940 x 520 millimetres and weighs 800 grams. Made of durable Oxford-weave nylon with PVC backing, it has an internal foam core and non-clog valve on top. Although similar to Therm-a-Rest's standard mattress, the Lightweight is 254 millimetres shorter and 50 grams heavier, but slightly cheaper—\$65.60.

In contrast to these single-compartment mattresses, the three-quarter-length contoured Equalizer has six chambers, making complete compression of the mat at pressure points more difficult. Three chambers are completely independent, while the pillow, lower back and thigh chambers are connected, controlling the redistribution of air with body movement. Measuring 1370 x 510 millimetres and weighing 910 grams, the Equalizer is imported by *Mont Equipment*. RRP \$76.

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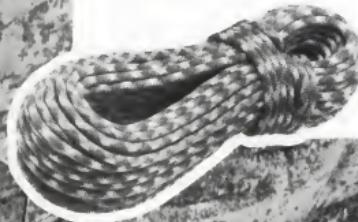


Kim Carrigan attempting the first ascent of Serious Young Lizards (3i), Mt Arapiles.

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Suunto JES compass.

• **Easy Direction.** Designed for people who find conventional compasses difficult to follow, the new Suunto JES base plate compass has red, yellow and green markings to simplify use. Suitable for many outdoor activities and made of durable plastic, it is distributed by Outdoor Survival Australia. RRP \$16.95.

• **Magic Lens.** The Itoya pocket lens from Rare and Unique is a light, flexible, and flat magnifying lens which has the dimensions of a credit card and is effective for map reading, studying insects and flowers, and lighting fires! This thin plastic sheet with moulded concentric prisms comes in a protective sleeve and costs about \$2.25.

• **Splash Bags.** Conical, inflatable, waterproof bags designed for adding dry stowage, buoyancy and strength to the bow or stern of your kayak are available from Wild Country. Some feature a priceless watertight zip, originally developed for deep-sea diving dry-suits, and are priced from \$110. Models with a double fold and Velcro seal are priced from \$30.

• **Baby Walking.** Improvements to the popular Flinders Rangers Camping Baby Carriers now mean a choice of four models, ranging from the plain Baby Rider I to the Baby Rider IV with adjustable seat, stand and padded hip belt—enough to lure any baby into the bush! Prices range from \$46 to \$79.

Two new baby carriers from Karrimor offer comfort and convenience for both carrier and carried. The Papoose Classic, made of KS-100e fabric used in Karrimor rucksacks, has a large pocket. RRP \$88. The Papoose Popular sells for \$77.

New products (on loan to Wild), and/or information about them, including colour slides, are welcome for possible review in this department. Written items should be typed, include recommended retail prices, and preferably not exceed 200 words. Send items to the Editor, Wild, PO Box 419, Prahran, Victoria 3181.



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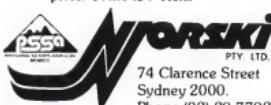
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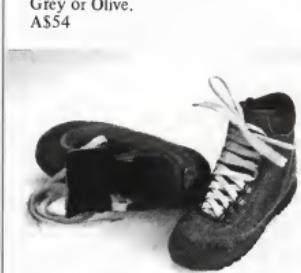
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Contributors

Stephen Brew attended no less than eight different schools, then studied accountancy before teaching for a while. A keen bushwalker, canoeist and Nordic skier, he established the Melbourne outdoor equipment shop, Outsports, in 1982. As a consequence, he claims that his achievements now include being capable of conversing with gear freaks, which, he says, qualifies him as a 'sleeping-bagologist'!

Grant Dixon is a geologist who has tried, less successfully in recent years, to complete a PhD at the University of Tasmania. However, his real interests lie in wilderness conservation. He worked full-time for the Wilderness Society during the Franklin Blockade and the 1983 Federal election campaign, then toured eastern Australia with his own audio-visual show. He is presently Business Manager of the Wilderness Society.

Born in Tasmania, he is a bushwalker, climber and photographer. Grant has visited most parts of Tasmania in his 12 years of walking, and has climbed in Tasmania and New Zealand.

Mike Grimmer grew up in Minnesota, USA, where his first outdoor adventures were canoe trips on the Canadian border. He became interested in mountains, and spent several summers in Europe, first walking and later climbing.

Since those 'early days' Mike has lived, climbed and skied extensively in New Zealand, Europe (where he skied the famous Haute Route), Canada, the USA and Australia. Now based at Mt Beauty, Victoria, he spends his winter teaching Nordic skiing and leading ski tours on the Bogong High Plains, and most summers in New Zealand, where he is undergoing the New Zealand Mountain Guides' Association assessment programme.

Graham Hambleton's involvement with the outdoors began in the early 1970s with a walk towards Roaring Meg on Wilsons Promontory, Victoria. After a wet and cold night he became obsessed with how to get a good night's sleep. Since then he has worked tirelessly towards that goal, as those who bushwalk with him will testify! Graham works at the Melbourne outdoor equipment shop, Outsports, when he is not canoeing, bushwalking or cross country skiing.

Geoff Law is the Australian Conservation Foundation's Campaign Officer in Tasmania—in 1985 working solely on the woodchip issue. Geoff has been bushwalking, cross country skiing and rafting since 1974 when he joined the Melbourne Bushwalkers. His interest in Tasmania started in December 1975 when he walked the Overland and South Coast tracks. After numerous trips to Tasmania's South-west, he moved to Hobart in 1982 to work full-time for the Wilderness Society on the Franklin campaign. He has worked for ACF since January 1985.

Roger Lembit has walked extensively in the Blue Mountains and Tasmania and has been an active bushwalker for eight years. A member of the Sydney University Bushwalkers, Roger has



made a number of exploratory trips in these areas. He also holds strong views on the responsibility of bushwalkers to protect places they visit.

Roger's interest in the natural environment extends to his working life as Project Officer of the Nature Conservation Council. He has been involved in campaigns to protect rainforests in New South Wales, and in the preservation of South-west Tasmania.

His book, *Bushwalking* (written with Wild correspondent, Dave Noble), was published in 1984. (See review in Wild no 15.)

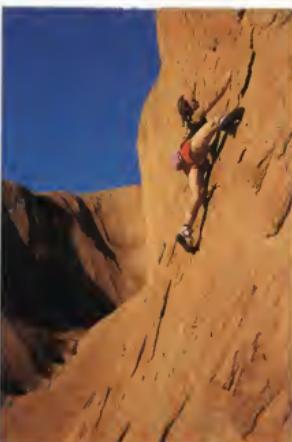
Ted Plummer has been bushwalking intermittently for eight years, but became more active, and developed an interest in Nordic skiing, when he became a student at the University of New South Wales, where he is currently studying industrial chemistry. Ted's favourite walking areas are the Central Plateau of Tasmania, the Victorian High Plains, and the rainforest regions of northern NSW.

Leo Sexton, 24, developed an interest in the outdoors when he was at Footscray Institute, Victoria, and was introduced to climbing and kayaking. He has been a bushwalker for ten years and has spent two seasons climbing and walking in New Zealand's Mt Aspiring region. Leo took up cross country skiing with friends 'to fill in the long cold winters' and, in summer, goes bushwalking in Tasmania. He claims that his interest in photography is only limited by a

lack of money to purchase expensive equipment, a situation which he hopes to rectify some day!

Geoff Wyatt has been a leading professional mountain and ski guide in Canada, the Himalayas and New Zealand for some 20 years. In 1973 he founded his own mountain instruction business, Mountain Recreation, based in the Mt Aspiring region of New Zealand. Originally from Tasmania, he is well known for his hard new routes in the Peruvian Andes and New Zealand, for being one of the most prominent mountaineering instructors in Australasia, and for making the first ski descent from the summit of Mt Cook, in 1982.

Heinz Zak, 27, is a school teacher in the small Austrian village of Scharnitz, where he lives with his wife and two-year-old son. He started



rockclimbing when he was 15, and says that his hobbies, which he lists as travel and photography, have taken him to many European climbing areas and three times to the USA.

With his family, he toured Australia for six months in 1984-85. One of the world's best climbing photographers (see his work in Rock 1986), he is also an outstanding rockclimber, having led India (29) and Phoenix (5.13), which are amongst the hardest climbs in Australia and the USA, respectively.

These notes describe writers and photographers whose first contribution to Wild appears in this issue. Brief notes at the conclusion of articles and features by contributors whose work has been previously published in Wild include reference to the issue in which it first appeared.

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'Horrified, Disgusted and Outraged'

Queensland canoeists on written rampage

I am a class VI kayaker with more than ten years' experience in Australia, and the USA where I had experience as an instructor and in river safety and rescue techniques. I have paddled the upper Nymboida River three times.

Regarding the article 'Water Babies' in *Wild* no 17, I am horrified, disgusted and outraged at the apparent lack of responsibility, regard for safety and the attitude of the members of the White Water Canoe Club as portrayed by this article.

It is obvious to me that not only the two beginners involved, but also the other members of the club, do not understand the dangers of such a trip. I am sure that any canoeist with the slightest degree of common sense and regard for safety would agree that it is totally foolish and irresponsible to take such novices on a trip of that difficulty.

The part that I find most horrifying was the overall attitude of the trip members regarding the novices as 'entertainment', 'amusement' and objects of derision. Worse yet is that this disregard for safety, and the attitude towards beginners, was passed on to the two women who cannot wait to have their fun in turn. Certainly, they write that they had fun and were looked after, but they are beginners and do not know better.

It is up to experienced boaters to introduce beginners in a safe and responsible manner. The history of kayaking in the USA, which is at a more advanced level, shows that this sort of trip can easily, and eventually will, lead to serious accidents.

I sincerely hope that not just this canoe club, but all canoeists will take a serious look at safety and proper teaching and the advancement of canoeists before they experience a drowning like the one that occurred at the Nymboida slalom course on Goolang Creek in 1984.

Gordon Patchin
Ipswich, Qld

... It was with great concern and horror that we read the trip article, 'Water Babies', portraying the experiences of the two ladies canoeing the Nymboida River with the White Water Canoe Club.

As experienced kayakers, and as members of the Queensland Cruising Canoe Club, we felt that this venture was not only foolhardy and dangerous to the lives and safety of the trip members, particularly the two beginners, but detrimental to the image of canoeing.

Any canoeist with common sense and responsibility would not dream of taking beginners of their level down a grade-three river,

Wildfire

much less a grade-five river such as the upper Nymboida ...

We hope that the White Water Canoe Club in future takes a serious look at its attitude towards safe canoeing.

Christine O'Brien
(Not the *Wild* one!)

President

Queensland Cruising Canoe Club
Camira, Qld

Drive On

I am writing in response to the Editorial in *Wild* no 16 in which you make several generally degrading comments on how vehicular access has destroyed either places or the opportunity to enjoy a 'wilderness experience'.

Firstly, it should be stressed that the concept of a 'wilderness experience' is a personal one. What may be seen as an intrusion by vehicles into the bush ... could well be seen by others as an opportunity, their only one, of enjoying a wilderness experience.

Secondly, although it is agreed that irresponsible vehicle activity can have a damaging effect on the environment, the sensible and thoughtful use of vehicles in the bush has minimal effect on the landscape.

You also suggest that the introduction of vehicles is the main cause for the deterioration of the environment in the areas discussed. May I take this opportunity to suggest that you review the history of two naturally beautiful areas of the Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd National Parks, Blue Gum Forest and the lower Kowmung River area, which have been almost devastated by careless bushwalkers and campers. Blue Gum Forest was damaged to such an extent that it had to be completely shut off from camping to preserve its natural beauty. I make this point to indicate that the same type of damage you attribute to motor vehicles can also be attributed to bushwalkers. I stress that in both groups the prefix 'irresponsible' should be used.

I trust that you will accept these comments as an endeavour to encourage clearer discussion on the effects of recreation on the environment.

Rhys Jones
Secretary
Blue Mountains Four Wheel Drive Club
Glenbrook, NSW

Readers' letters are welcome. A selection will be published in this column. Letters of less than 200 words are more likely to be published. Write to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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Ph (Kathmandu) 41 2231

Classifieds

60 cents a word (minimum \$6.00) prepaid
Deadlines: 15 January (autumn issue), 15 April
(winter), 15 July (spring), 15 October (summer)
Advertisements will be inserted in first
available issue.

We reserve the right to alter or reject any
advertisement and will not be held responsible
for errors, although every care is taken to avoid
them.

All advertisements are accepted on the
express condition that they do not in any way
infringe the Trade Practices Act or violate any
existing copyright or Trade Mark.

Send order and payment to Wild
Publications Pty Ltd, PO Box 415, Prahran,
Victoria 3181.

DB Stuff, 100% Cotton Inner Sheets.
Colours, pink, white, yellow, blue.
Standard 210 centimetres, 400 grams
\$9.55, long 210 centimetres, 450 grams
\$11.85, double 800 grams \$18.60, YHA
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Australia. Cheque to DB Stuff, 47
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include postage within Australia.
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**Mountaineering books, antiquarian
and second-hand.** Free lists airmail
every two/three months. Dickinson
Books, 4 Chiltern Road, Cuckfield,
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England.

Outback and Barrier Reef Holidays,
by 4WD or mini-bus. Fully inclusive from
\$330 for 11 days. AUS-TRAIL, PO Box
109, Stafford Qld 4053. (07) 359 6651.

Position Vacant. The Wilderness Shop
in Box Hill, a small, energetic,
independent retailer of bushwalking,
mountaineering and outdoor climbing
equipment, has a permanent, full-time
sales position available from January
1986. Previous retail experience is not
essential but some experience in the
above-mentioned outdoor activities is a
definite requirement along with
enthusiasm and self-motivation. Apply
in writing to Mr Neil Blundy, The
Wilderness Shop Pty Ltd, 1 Carrington
Road, Box Hill, Victoria 3128.

Rockclimbing Helmet. Large Joe
Brown \$20. Phone Chris (03) 240 8482.

Rock 1985. To get this back issue (1986
also available \$3.95) of Australian
climbing magazine send a cheque or
money order today for \$3.95 (includes
postage anywhere in the world) to Wild
Publications Pty Ltd, PO Box 415,
Prahran, Victoria 3181. Trade enquiries
welcome.

Sleeping Bag. Fairway Down Bushwalker,
Dacron Hollowfill, modified rectangular,
long zip, as new, \$70. (03) 240 6482.

Take a Walk on the Wild Side. In the
Wild, long-sleeved cotton and polyester
windbreakers, short and long-sleeved
T-shirts \$9.95, to fit most sizes 16,
18, 19 or 20. Blue writing (on a Walk
on the Wild Side) on cream or lime
green writing on dark green or dark
blue writing on light blue. If in doubt
regarding sizing, allow for larger size.
Price includes packaging and surface
postage anywhere in Australia. Add
\$1.50 for each garment to overseas
addresses. Allow several weeks for
delivery. Send chequemoney order and
details, including size, to Wild
Publications Pty Ltd, PO Box 415,
Prahran, Victoria 3181.

Topographic Maps. Natmaps cover
Australia at 1:250,000 scale and
popular areas at 1:100,000 scale. Free
catalogues, PO Box 31, Belconnen, ACT
2616, or from accredited retailers.

Wanted. Lightweight expedition/touring
tent. (067) 65 8351.

**Warwick Decock Specialized
Consulting.** 30 years' experience
Expedition, funding, public relations.
Make a dream come true. PO Box 100,
Mosman, NSW 2088.

Wild Binders. Protect your magazine
in good-looking Wild binders. Emerald
green with light green lettering, each
one holds eight copies of Wild and
costs \$11.95 (including packaging and
surface postage anywhere in the world).
Use the Wild Order Form in this issue
or send chequemoney order and
details to Wild Publications Pty Ltd, PO
Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

Wild Clothing Specials. Discontinued
lines going cheap! Only a few items
available. Take a Walk on the Wild Side,
light blue writing on cream T-shirts
\$5.95, size 210 x size 144, 1 size 16;
long-sleeve windbreakers \$15.95, 1 size 12A,
3 x size 14A, 3 x size 16. Take a Walk
on the Wild Side! (large words), light
brown writing on cream T-shirts \$5.95,

3 x size 14A; long-sleeve windbreaker
\$15.95, 1 x size 12A. 'Discover
Wilderness', light and dark blue writing
on cream T-shirts \$5.95, 2 x size 14A.
If in doubt regarding sizing, allow for
larger size (where available). Price
includes packaging and surface
postage anywhere in Australia. Add
\$1.50 for each garment to overseas
addresses. Allow several weeks for
delivery. Because numbers are very
limited, please telephone first to
determine availability. Send
chequemoney order and details,
including size, to Wild Publications Pty
Ltd, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

Club News

Clubs are invited to use this column to
advise their members of events for the benefit
of members and new members. Please, to keep
members in touch and to give notice of their
meetings and other events.

25 cents a word (minimum \$3.00) for the
first 50 words, then 60 cents a word, prepaid
to Wild Publications Pty Ltd, PO Box 415,
Prahran, Victoria 3181.

ANU Mountaineering Club meets first
Wednesday each month at 8 pm at
Australian National University,
Canberra. Activities include canyoning,
climbing, bushwalking, skiing and
rogaining. Interested people should
contact the club through the ANU
Sports Union, the President (062) 49
4494, or Treasurer (062) 48 7142.

**Federation of Victorian Walking
Clubs (Vicwalk) Inc.** represents all
Victorian bushwalkers. • makes
submissions to government agencies to
maintain the best possible bushwalking
environment • encourages all walking
groups to affiliate • runs a search and
rescue section • publishes safety
information material and a list of clubs.
GPO Box 151F, Melbourne 3001.

Friends of Bogong National Park.
Join us: bushwalking, ski touring and
project activities. 3 Coling Avenue,
Carnegie 3163, (03) 589 5729.

Melbourne Bushwalkers. Day walks,
week-end and extended trips, social
functions, guest speakers, slides. Club
night every Wednesday 7.30 pm upstairs
377 Little Bourke Street (Mountain
Designs building) for booking on trips,
information, socializing. Visitors always
welcome. GPO Box 175Q, Melbourne
3001.

**The Federation of Bushwalking
Clubs NSW Bushwalkers Search and
Rescue.** For general enquiries write to
PO Box 228, West Ryde, NSW 2114. For
emergencies, only, contact: Keith
Maxwell (02) 622 0049 (h), (02) 88 9231
(w); Peter Treseder (02) 48 4182 (h),
(02) 808 2011 (w); Keith Williams (02) 86
4262 (h), (02) 635 6644 (w).

The Victorian Climbing Club meets at
8 pm on the last Thursday of each
month (except December; and second
last Thursday in September) at 188
Glenelg Street, Parkville 3052. Visitors
and new members interested in
rockclimbing are welcome. Contact the
Secretary, GPO Box 1725P, Melbourne,
Victoria 3001.

YHA Activities meet every Monday
(except public holidays) at 8 pm at
100-102 Flinders Street, 33 Victoria Street,
Melbourne (opposite Trades Hall). Activities
include bicycle touring, bushwalking, canoeing,
field studies, horse riding, Nordic skiing, portable
hostels, sailing, scuba diving, water-
skiing. New members welcome. Contact
YHA Victoria, 122 Flinders Street,
Melbourne (03) 651 5422.

Wild Shot



Brian Springell receives a visitor, Lake Argyle, Western Australia. Mark Morwood

Wild welcomes slides for this page; payment for slides is at our standard rates. Mail slides to Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

Today's classic. Tomorrow's technology.

This looks like the traditional jacket beloved of climbers and outdoor people. But all resemblance to traditional clothing ends right there.

This Peter Storm classic is treated – in our own plant – with an entirely new proofing technology. Yet another Peter Storm first.

It doesn't smell. It never needs re-proofing. It doesn't affect the natural suppleness of the garment's traditional cotton look – even in cold weather.

What it **does** do is offer 100% protection against a downpour of monsoon proportions. It's also thornproof.

And, while it won't let rain in, we also guarantee it will let condensation out... no matter how long you wear it, no matter how often you dry clean it.

The Peter Storm classic. A traditional all-weather garment which makes a welcome break with tradition.

At leading climbing and sports shops.

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Makes Great Looking Sportsmen